"Gillen works his magic, proving why he is perfect for Eternals comics."
– You Don't Read Comics

ETERNALS

GILLEN
WEAVER
ZAMA
BODENHEIM
SALAZAR

A HISTORY WRITTEN IN BLOOD

MARVEL

ETERNALS

A HISTORY WRITTEN IN BLOOD

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ETERNALS: THANOS RISES VARIANT BY **DUSTIN WEAVER**

THANOS RISES

ETERNALS
THANOS RISES

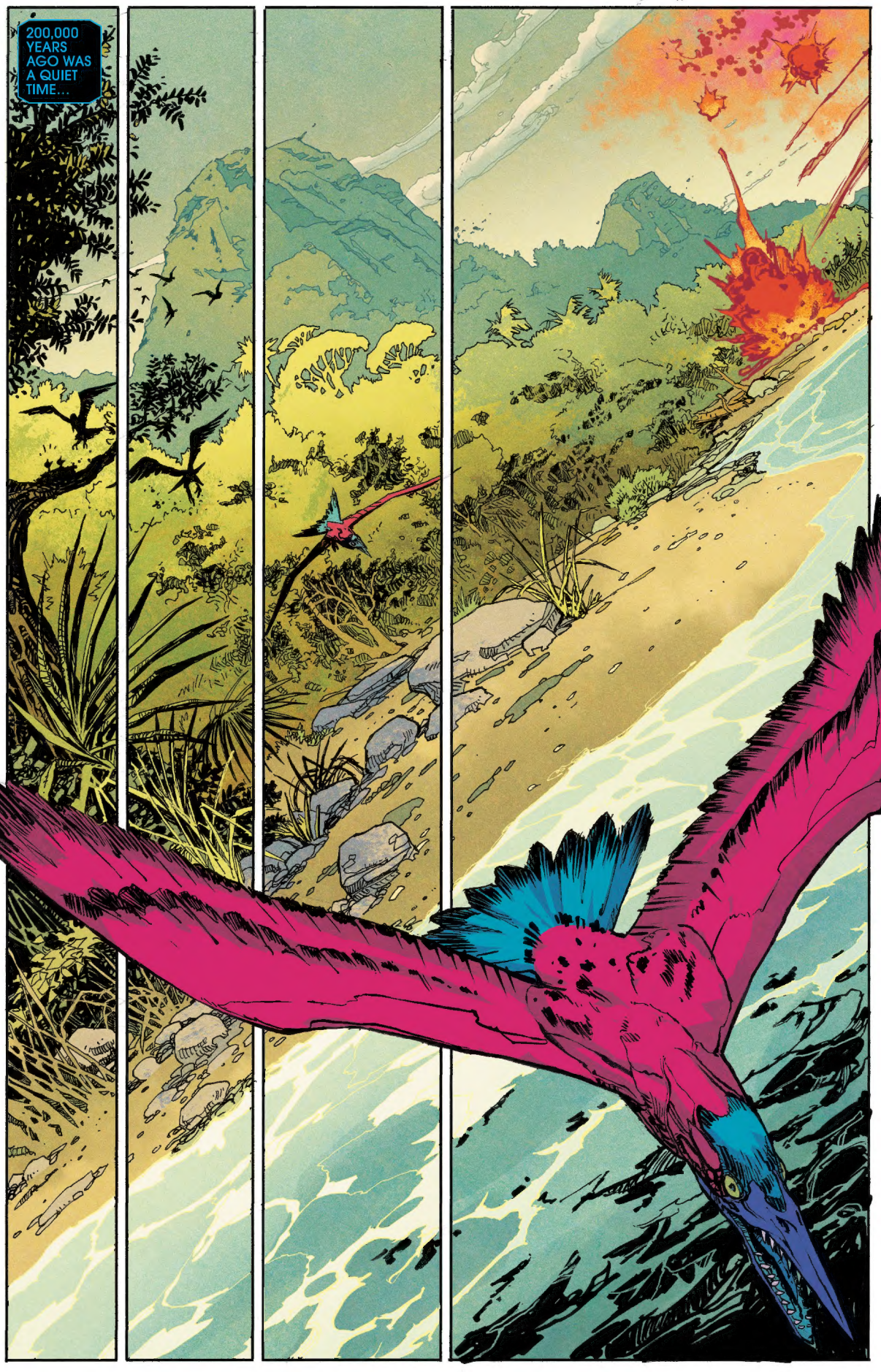
Thanos' lust for death has led to the murder of billions. The Mad Titan has been a foremost threat to the entire galaxy, especially those of Earth.

Most recently he's been murdering his extended family (the Eternals) and almost destroying the Machine (i.e. me).

Wait--"extended family"? Eternals don't breed.

So who's to blame for Thanos?

SINS OF THE SONS


200,000 YEARS AGO WAS A QUIET TIME...

...EXCEPT WHEN IT WASN'T.

THE LAST BATTLE PRECEDING THE TITAN SCHISM.
BEFORE THE ACCORD.

THE ETERNALS' CHRONOLOGY

FIRST HOST
1,000,000 years ago

URANITE HERESY
600,000 years ago

ASCENSION OF KRONOS
500,000 years ago

TITAN SCHISM
200,000 years ago

FINAL HOST
1 year ago

THANOSIAN TERROR
Now

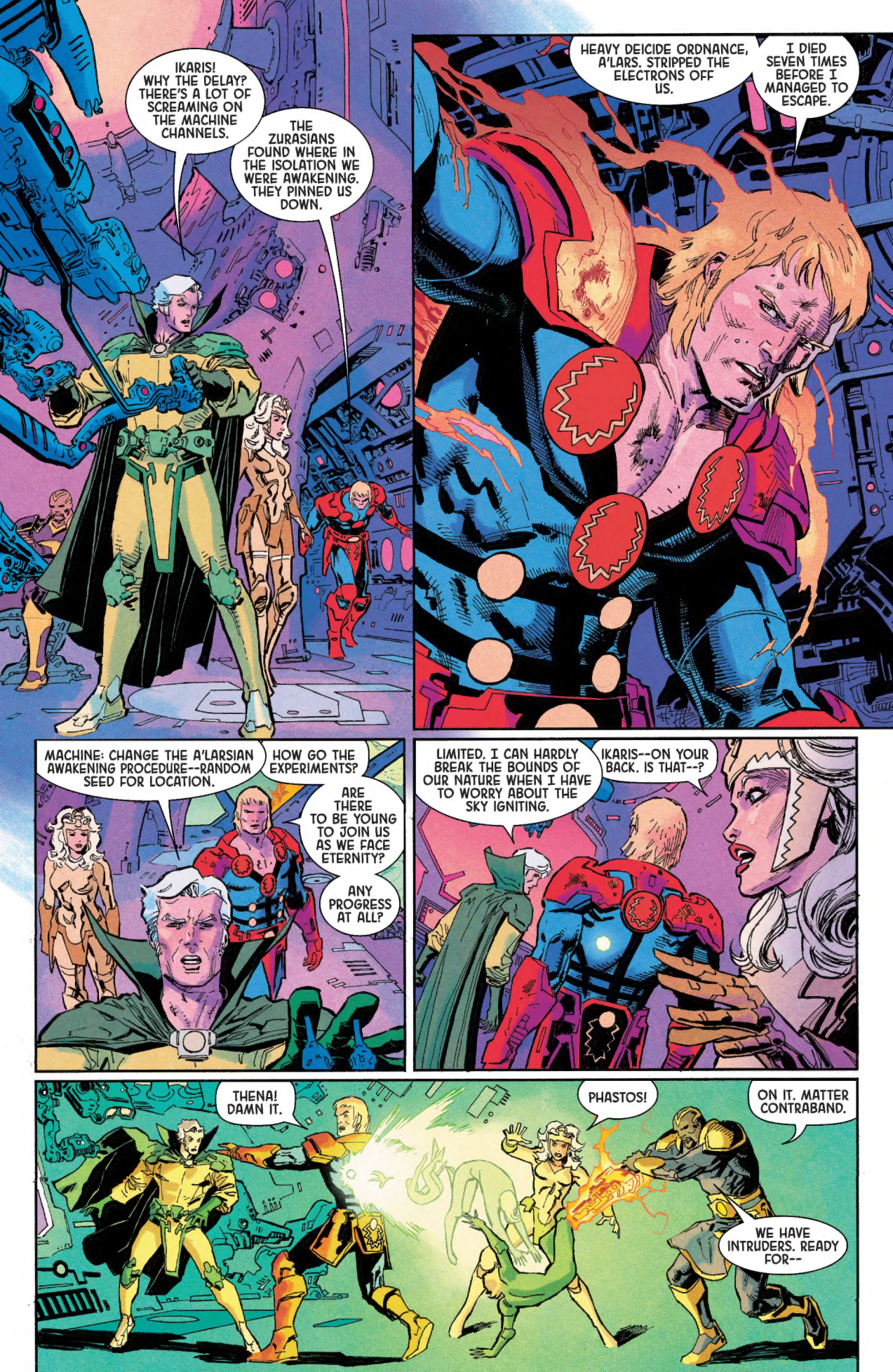
Eternals often exist in families. However, these are created families, made in one breath. There was no act of sex that led to the creation of any Eternal. Mother, Father, Son, Sister are all but designations.

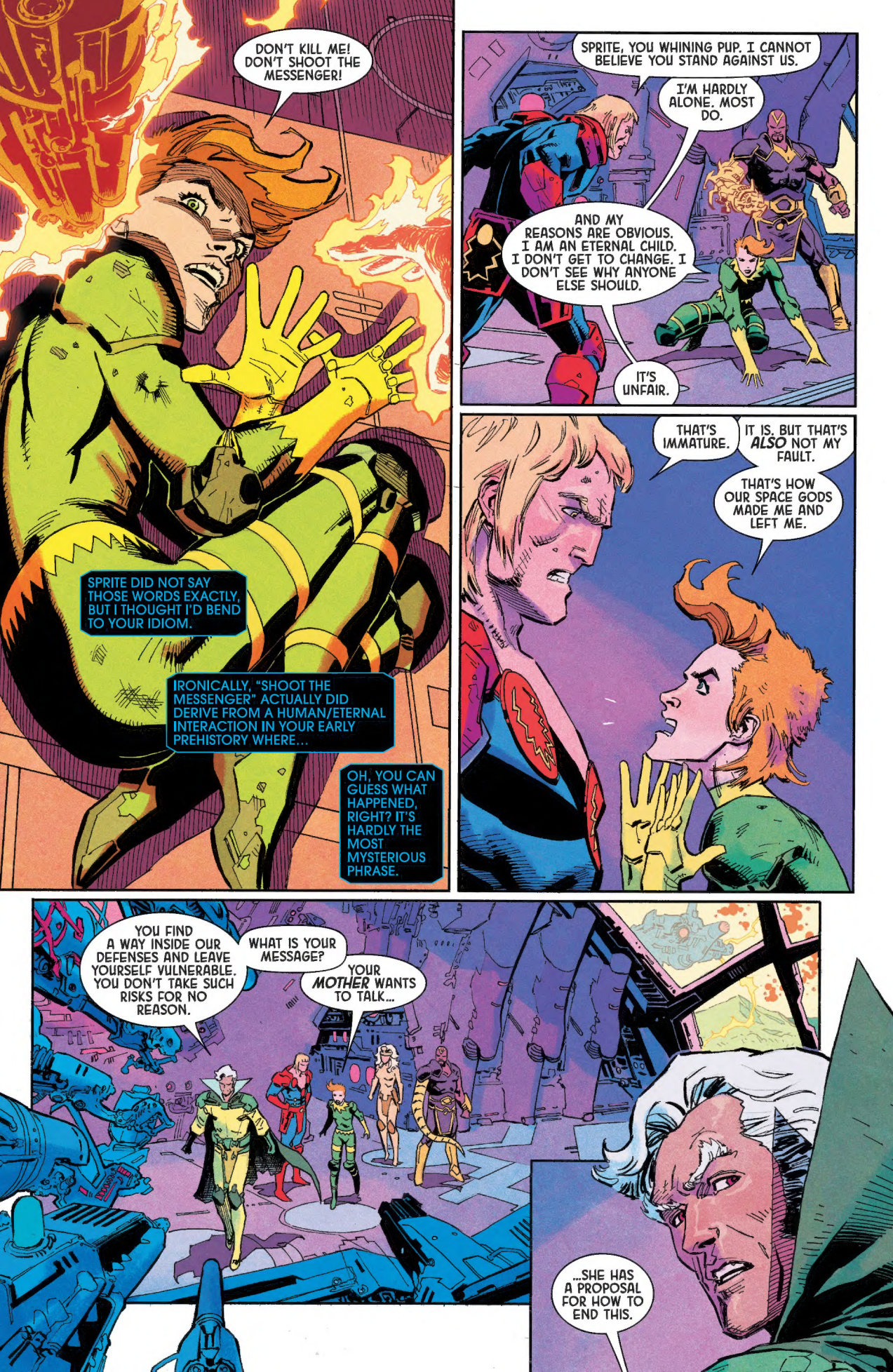
Eternals are capable of breeding with other species, sometimes producing enhanced offspring with extended lives. However, these Nephilites are not part of the Great Machine, and so are not true Eternals.

A'Lars (later "Mentor") headed a faction that argued that Eternals should try to expand the machine by discovering a means of true Eternal reproduction.

Zuras headed a faction that argued in favor of the status quo.

The arguments escalated into war.


IKARIS! WHY THE DELAY? THERE'S A LOT OF SCREAMING ON THE MACHINE CHANNELS.
THE ZURASIANS FOUND WHERE IN THE ISOLATION WE WERE AWAKENING. THEY PINNED US DOWN.
HEAVY DEICIDE ORDNANCE, A'LARS. STRIPPED THE ELECTRONS OFF US.
I DIED SEVEN TIMES BEFORE I MANAGED TO ESCAPE.
MACHINE: CHANGE THE A'LARSIAN AWAKENING PROCEDURE--RANDOM SEED FOR LOCATION.
HOW GO THE EXPERIMENTS?
ARE THERE TO BE YOUNG TO JOIN US AS WE FACE ETERNITY?
ANY PROGRESS AT ALL?
LIMITED. I CAN HARDLY BREAK THE BOUNDS OF OUR NATURE WHEN I HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THE SKY IGNITING.
IKARIS--ON YOUR BACK. IS THAT--?
THENA! DAMN IT.
PHASTOS!
ON IT. MATTER CONTRABAND.
WE HAVE INTRUDERS. READY FOR--


DON'T KILL ME! DON'T SHOOT THE MESSENGER!
SPRITE DID NOT SAY THOSE WORDS EXACTLY, BUT I THOUGHT I'D BEND TO YOUR IDIOM.
IRONICALLY, "SHOOT THE MESSENGER" ACTUALLY DID DERIVE FROM A HUMAN/ETERNAL INTERACTION IN YOUR EARLY PREHISTORY WHERE...
OH, YOU CAN GUESS WHAT HAPPENED, RIGHT? IT'S HARDLY THE MOST MYSTERIOUS PHRASE.
SPRITE, YOU WHINING PUP. I CANNOT BELIEVE YOU STAND AGAINST US.
I'M HARDLY ALONE. MOST DO.
AND MY REASONS ARE OBVIOUS. I AM AN ETERNAL CHILD. I DON'T GET TO CHANGE. I DON'T SEE WHY ANYONE ELSE SHOULD.
IT'S UNFAIR.
THAT'S IMMATURE.
IT IS. BUT THAT'S ALSO NOT MY FAULT.
THAT'S HOW OUR SPACE GODS MADE ME AND LEFT ME.
YOU FIND A WAY INSIDE OUR DEFENSES AND LEAVE YOURSELF VULNERABLE. YOU DON'T TAKE SUCH RISKS FOR NO REASON.
WHAT IS YOUR MESSAGE?
YOUR MOTHER WANTS TO TALK...
...SHE HAS A PROPOSAL FOR HOW TO END THIS.

THE MEETING TOOK PLACE ON TWO PAIRED MOLECULES, WEAVED BY DAINA, WIFE OF KRONOS, MOTHER OF ZURAS AND A'LARS.
SO...LET'S BEGIN WITH YOU FORMALLY STATING YOUR COMPLAINTS. IF YOU DON'T VENT A LITTLE STEAM NOW, WE WON'T GET ANYWHERE...
OUR FATHERS AND HIS BROTHERS *FAILED.*
MAD URANOS TRIED TO SCOURGE THE WORLD. OUR FATHER BOUGHT GODHOOD AT THE NEAR EXPENSE OF THE PLANET. OCEANUS RETIRED TO A VIGIL OF THE DEVIANTS FOR FEAR OF HIS PASSIONS...
IT WAS *OUR* TURN TO LEAD...AND THIS IS WHAT WE DO? YOU CAUSED WAR WITH YOUR LUNACY!
"FATHERS"? THE WORD'S A LIE. WE HAVE NO FATHER! WE HAVE NO CHILDREN! OUR "FATHER" AS DEFINED BY THE MACHINE IS NO SUCH THING.
TO THINK THAT *ETERNAL* FAMILIES SHOULD BE LIKE *MORTAL* FAMILIES IS AN ERROR, AND YOU KNOW IT.
AND I SAY WE HAVE NO IDEA OF WHAT WE COULD BE!
ENOUGH. I KNOW HOW THIS ONE GOES. IT ESCALATES INTO WAR. THE ARGUMENTS ARE OLD.
NO NEED TO REPEAT THEM. WE ALL KNOW THEM WELL...
QUITE, BUT YOU PROBABLY DON'T...

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO KEY ARGUMENTS IN THE TITANOS SCHISM

ZURASIAN: There is no need for this experiment. Eternals are capable of breeding if they wish.

A'LARSITE: The creation of Nephilites is not an extension of the Eternal line.

ZURASIAN: Are you saying the attachments to the Nephilites is worthless?

A'LARSITE: No, simply that they are not Eternals.

A'LARSITE: The Machine and all Eternals in it were presumably made for a purpose. We have excluded Eternals. The Excluded Eternals are not serving their purpose. At the least, they should be replaced.

ZURASIAN: While they do not have freedom of action, they still exist and so are still part of the Machine. It is simply that their purpose at this present time is to be Excluded.

A'LARSITE: This is simple sophistry.

ZURASIAN: And your argument is in bad faith. You do not wish to just replace them. This is the thin side of the wedge.

A'LARSITE: While you are making a slippery slope argument.

A'LARSITE: The Prime Eternals' faction is petrified of your power being overturned by a new generation.

ZURASIAN: Untrue. The Machine has changed leadership many times. The era of the Patriarchs is over, and now it is the second generation's. This is how the Machine is designed and how it should be continued.

A'LARSITE: You are in favor of this as the system has placed you in control for now. It remains to be seen if you would submit to change. This could still be about protecting your position.

ZURASIAN: This is a pure ad hominien attack on Zuras' character and a rejection of the decision of the Uni-Mind to support him in this. Eternals do not wish this. You are the minority. It is you who are acting against democratic mandate.

ZURASIAN: The Celestials created us, and we are incapable of breeding. Would you presume to say you know better than God?

A'LARSITE: We have asked the Celestials if they object to us breeding. They have not answered. Would you presume to know the mind of God?

ZURASIAN: Irrelevant. The Celestials are not known for their communicative nature. We are talking about the little Celestial guidance we do have.

A'LARSITE: If we argue accept we are to act according to the Celestials' will, their clearest guidance is in the principles. We protect the Machine. The Machine is best protected by improving the Machine.

ZURASIAN: This is a leap of faith. You have no evidence that the Machine will be improved by expansion.

A'LARSITE: You refuse to let us gather evidence.

ZURASIAN: We refuse to let you endanger the Machine.

ZURASIAN: Eternals exist in eternal family structures. We have families, parents and children, relationships forged into our very nature. The idea that we are lacking anything is impossible.

A'LARSITE: But the creation of new familial bonds does not alter the Machine but adds to it. Equally, it is untrue: There are Eternals without family, so without any such structure. They have no family, but only friends.

ZURASIAN: Eternal friendship is more powerful than a mortal familial bond, it exists longer, therefore accumulates meaning.

A'LARSITE: This is not how love works. You would argue that the smallest Eternal feeling is more important than any mortal passion, simply because it exists for longer.

~~ZURASIAN: Perhaps I would.~~

ZURASIAN: Silence the Uranite. He's not helping anyone.

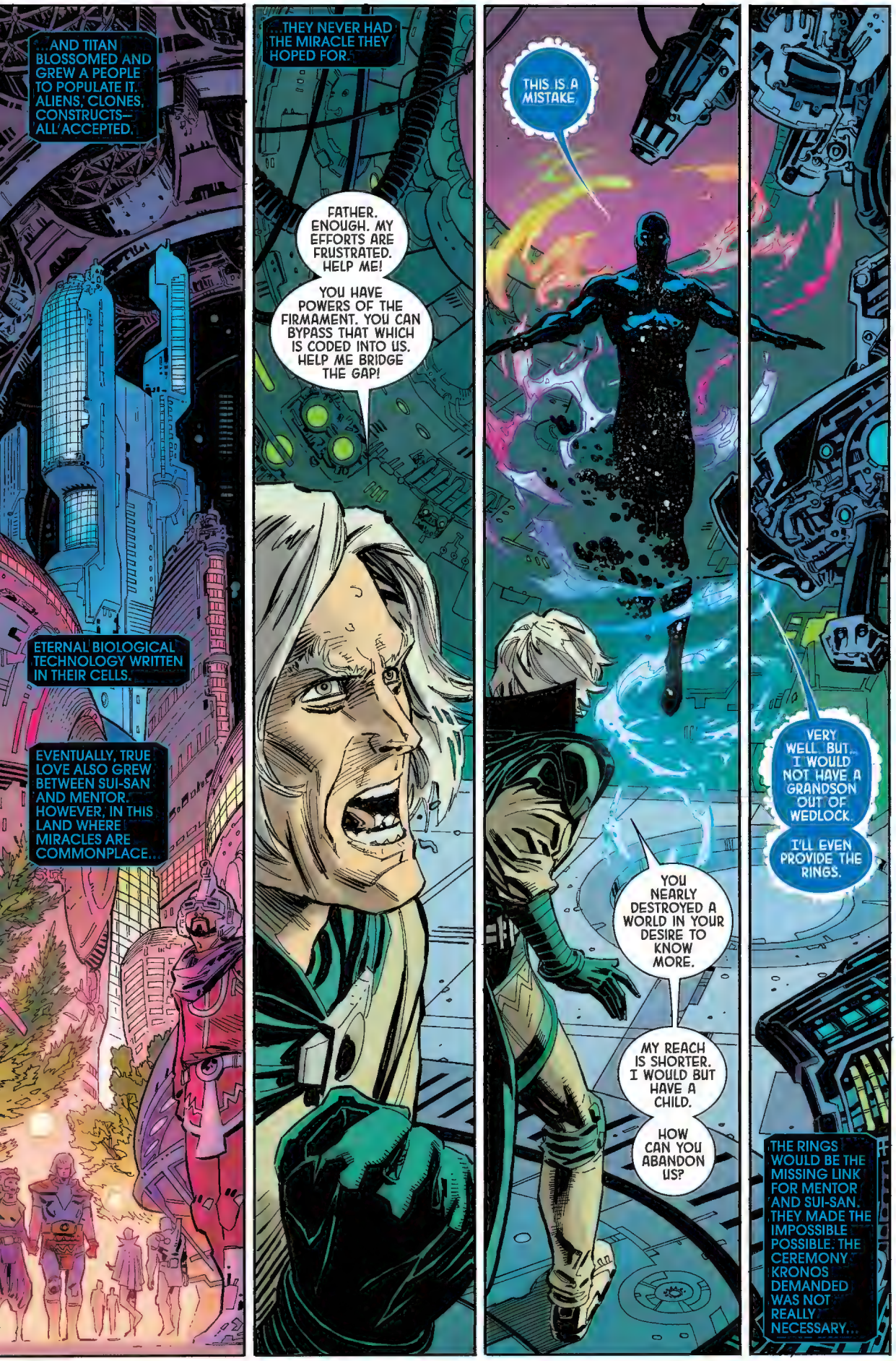
A'LARS-- YOU MAY NOT RESPECT THE FATHERS, BUT PERHAPS YOU WILL LISTEN TO ME.
THE GAIAN SISTERHOOD HAS STUDIED ALL THIS. IT DOES NOT REQUIRE PROPHECY TO SEE THE FUTURE FOR BOTH OF YOU...
YOU WILL LOSE THE WAR AND DAMAGE THE GREAT MACHINE.
YOU HAVE NOT THE NUMBERS... AND YOU CANNOT COMPLETE YOUR RESEARCH WHILE THE WAR CONTINUES.
AND YOU, ZURAS...YOU WILL WIN, GIVEN TIME, BUT MANY DEFIANT ETERNALS WILL END UP BEING EXCLUDED.
YOU SAY YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE MACHINE. ALL EXCLUSIONS HURT IT.
WE SUGGEST WE END THIS LIKE PRIOR CONFLICTS: THE MAJORITY OF ETERNALS WILL HAVE THEIR MEMORIES REMOVED. ALL GRUDGES MUST BE FORGOTTEN...
IN EXCHANGE, YOU, A'LARS, HAVE A LIFETIME IN EXILE TO SEE WHETHER ETERNALS CAN SPAWN A LINEAGE.
NO! IT IS NOT ABOUT WHETHER ETERNALS CAN... IT'S WHETHER SPAWNING A TRUE LINEAGE IS A GOOD IDEA.
EXACTLY. I AM SURE IF I HAD FREE REIGN I COULD ACHIEVE IT--BUT THE TRICK IS SEEING WHAT AWAITS US THERE. THAT'S WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW...
FINALLY. IT APPEARS THAT YOU ARE OF ONE MIND.
THE WAR ENDED...

...AND ALL THAT DAINA SUGGESTED WAS DONE.
I'M GLAD FOR THE RESET. I SUSPECT I WAS TURNING A TEENSY BIT BITTER. WHAT SIDE DO YOU THINK WE WERE ON?
HEY--HERE'S A WEIRD IDEA. WHAT IF WE WERE ON *OPPOSITE* SIDES?
ER...YOU OFTEN ATTACK ME.
THAT IS NOT THE SAME.
IT IS DONE. YOU SHOULD LEAVE.
WHAT IS YOUR PLAN? COLONIALISTS? OTHER SPECIES? CLONES? NEPHILITE-ESQUE MODES?
THE IDEA OF US TWO WAGING WAR UPON ONE ANOTHER REVOLTS ME.
OH, I WILL CREATE A PEOPLE DERIVED FROM ETERNALS BY THOSE METHODS... BUT THAT ISN'T A TRUE ETERNAL.
THAT MUST COME FROM A MORE BIOLOGICAL ROUTE...

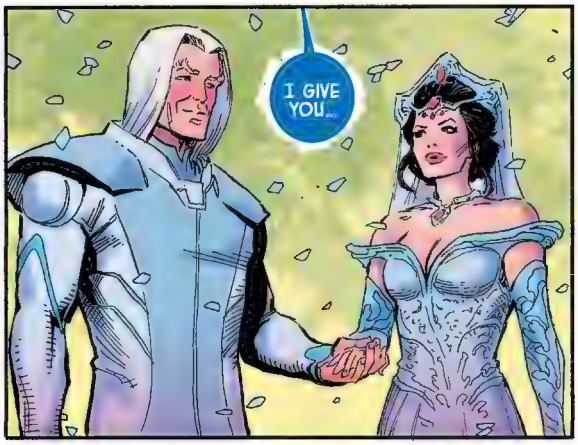
SO YOU SEEK AN ETERNAL LOVER TO JOIN YOU. ONE ALREADY LOST?
WHO? DO YOU THINK YOU CAN FIND ORA? O-XX, PERHAPS?
NO, I WAS THINKING OF SOMETHING ELSE.
ONE OF THE URANITES STILL LIVES...
HEH. IN THIS AT LEAST, YOU'RE WISE.
SHE JOINED WICKED WORK BEFORE. SHE COULD AGAIN.
I DO NOT THINK HER WICKED. I THINK SHE MADE A MISTAKE.
GOOD LUCK. I WISH YOU HAPPINESS. YOU MAY NOT THINK ME A TRUE MOTHER, BUT I AM YOUR MOTHER NEVERTHELESS.
IT'S NOT THAT. YOU ARE MY MOTHER. I CANNOT DENY THAT ANY MORE THAN I CAN DENY THE AIR IN MY LUNGS OR THE CHARGE SPHERES IN MY FINGERTIPS.
BUT SIMPLE REPRODUCTION? MOST BEINGS HAVE IT. WHY NOT US?
I HOPE YOU ARE SUCCESSFUL...BUT DO NOT WISH TOO HARD.
REMEMBER YOUR FATHER--HE IS BOTH TRAPPED IN THE EXCLUSION AND A GHOST IN THE HEAVENS.
AMBITION CAN TEAR YOU APART, LITERALLY AND FIGURATIVELY.
REMEMBER YOUR FATHER.
DAINA IS A SUBTLE GOD AND A'LARS DID NOT MISS IT.
A COSMIC DEITY OF TIME IS A GOOD FRIEND TO HAVE WHEN ALONE IN THE COSMOS.
AND A'LARS WOULD BE ALONE. AS HE WAS AWAY FROM EARTH, I SPENT THOUSANDS OF YEARS UNAWARE OF WHAT OCCURRED.
I ONLY CAUGHT UP WHEN THEY RETURNED, AFTER THEY DIED.
ER...SPOILERS.

TITAN.
SUI-SAN?
SUI-SAN? ARE YOU HERE?
I AM. BUT WHY ARE YOU HERE, A'LARS?
NOT A'LARS. MENTOR. I AM STARTING A NEW ENDEAVOR, SO I NEED A NEW NAME FOR IT.
I COME IN HOPE OF FINDING A FELLOW EXILE.
WHY ARE YOU HERE?
DO NOT MOCK MY FALLEN STATE.
YOU KNOW.

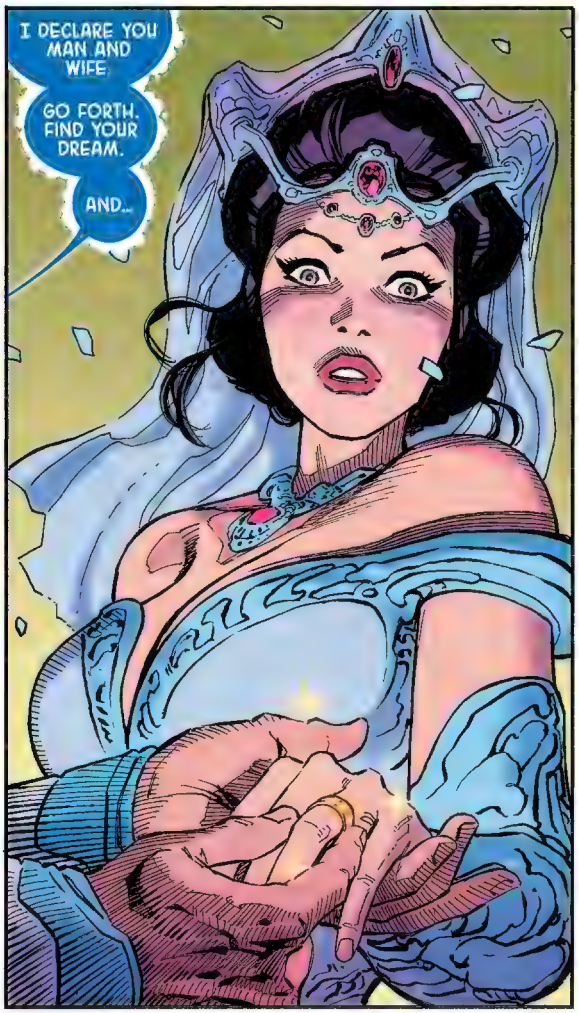
IN DEFEAT, THOSE WHO SIDED WITH URANOS AND SURVIVED LEFT EARTH, ESCAPING THE HARSHNESS OF ETERNAL JUSTICE.
YES--AND THEY ALL EVENTUALLY DIED, AWOKE BACK ON EARTH, AND WERE MIND-WIPED. THEY MAINLY SERVE OCEANUS NOW.
THEY WERE LUCKY NOT TO BE *EXCLUDED.*
BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT I WAS ASKING...
YOU ARE HERE BECAUSE YOU JOINED THE URANITES...BUT YOU DO NOT HAVE URANOS' GENOCIDAL PASSION.
WHY *DID* YOU JOIN THE URANITES?
FOR LOVE. MY LOVE SIDED WITH THE URANITES. I COULD NOT FIGHT THEM.
IT WAS A MISTAKE. LOVE DIES, AND THEN ONLY THE ASHES REMAIN.
WE ALL MAKE MISTAKES FOR LOVE...
...BUT LOVE CAN END WELL TOO.
YOU HAVE COME HERE TO SEDUCE ME.
PERHAPS EVENTUALLY...BUT I COME TO YOU BECAUSE I SEE A PROUD ETERNAL WHO HAS LIVED IN HER RUINS FOR TOO LONG.
I THINK SHE WOULD WANT A FUTURE. I THINK HER LIKE TITAN.
A DISASTER.
A PLACE REDUCED TO ITS STRONG FOUNDATIONS.
WHERE ONE CAN BUILD.
ALL STORIES ARE BORN OF HOPE. THE BELIEF THAT THERE WILL BE A NEXT LINE IS AN ACT OF HOPE.
MENTOR AND SUI-SAN HOPED...

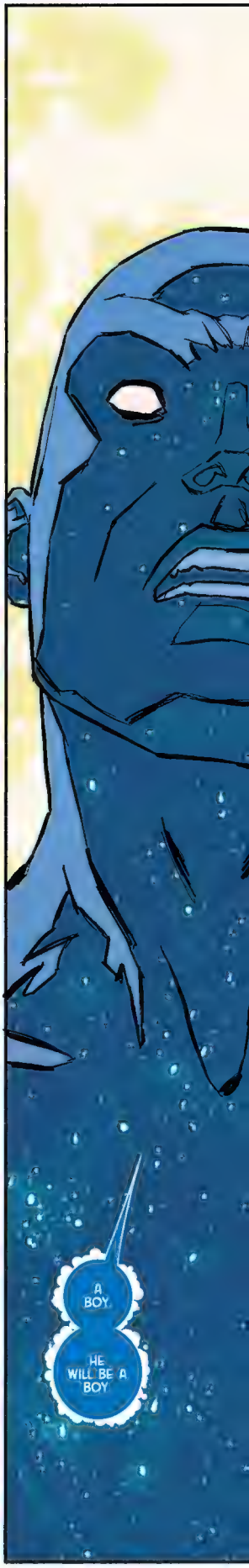

...AND TITAN BLOSSOMED AND GREW A PEOPLE TO POPULATE IT. ALIENS, CLONES, CONSTRUCTS—ALL ACCEPTED.
ETERNAL BIOLOGICAL TECHNOLOGY WRITTEN IN THEIR CELLS.
EVENTUALLY, TRUE LOVE ALSO GREW BETWEEN SUI-SAN AND MENTOR. HOWEVER, IN THIS LAND WHERE MIRACLES ARE COMMONPLACE...
...THEY NEVER HAD THE MIRACLE THEY HOPED FOR.
FATHER. ENOUGH. MY EFFORTS ARE FRUSTRATED. HELP ME!
YOU HAVE POWERS OF THE FIRMAMENT. YOU CAN BYPASS THAT WHICH IS CODED INTO US. HELP ME BRIDGE THE GAP!
THIS IS A MISTAKE
YOU NEARLY DESTROYED A WORLD IN YOUR DESIRE TO KNOW MORE.
MY REACH IS SHORTER. I WOULD BUT HAVE A CHILD.
HOW CAN YOU ABANDON US?
VERY WELL. BUT... I WOULD NOT HAVE A GRANDSON OUT OF WEDLOCK.
I'LL EVEN PROVIDE THE RINGS.
THE RINGS WOULD BE THE MISSING LINK FOR MENTOR AND SUI-SAN. THEY MADE THE IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBLE. THE CEREMONY KRONOS DEMANDED WAS NOT REALLY NECESSARY...

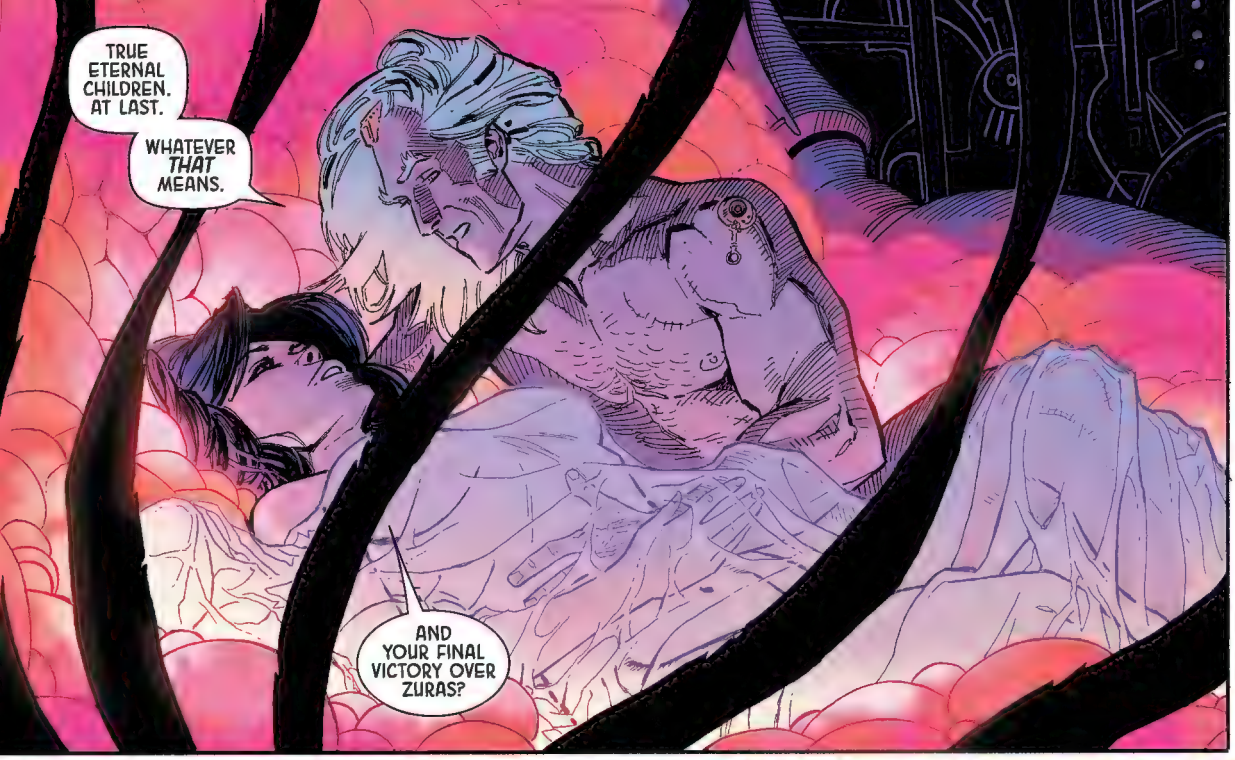
...HOWEVER, I UNDERSTAND IT WAS QUITE A BEAUTIFUL OCCASION.


I GIVE YOU...

...THE QUANTUM BANDS.

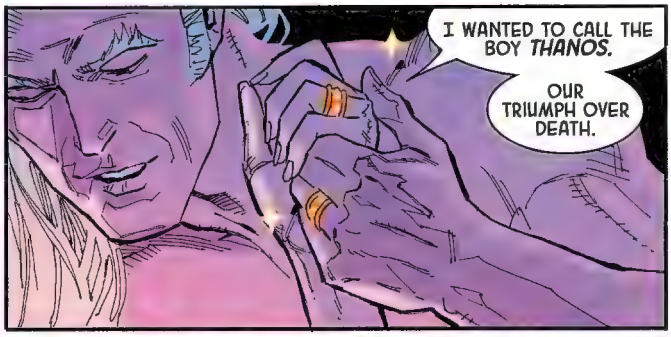

I DECLARE YOU MAN AND WIFE.
GO FORTH. FIND YOUR DREAM.
AND...


A BOY.
HE WILL BE A BOY.


TRUE ETERNAL CHILDREN. AT LAST.
WHATEVER *THAT* MEANS.
AND YOUR FINAL VICTORY OVER ZURAS?

NO, MY LOVE. THAT MAY HAVE BEEN WHERE I CAME FROM, BUT I'VE COME A LONG WAY. THE ONLY REASON FOR THIS IS ***US. WE*** ARE THE REASON.
WE HAVE DEFIED HOW THE CELESTIALS MADE US, FOR LOVE AND THE FUTURE.
HE WILL BE A SCIENTIST.
HE WILL BE A POET.
HE WILL BE CALLED...

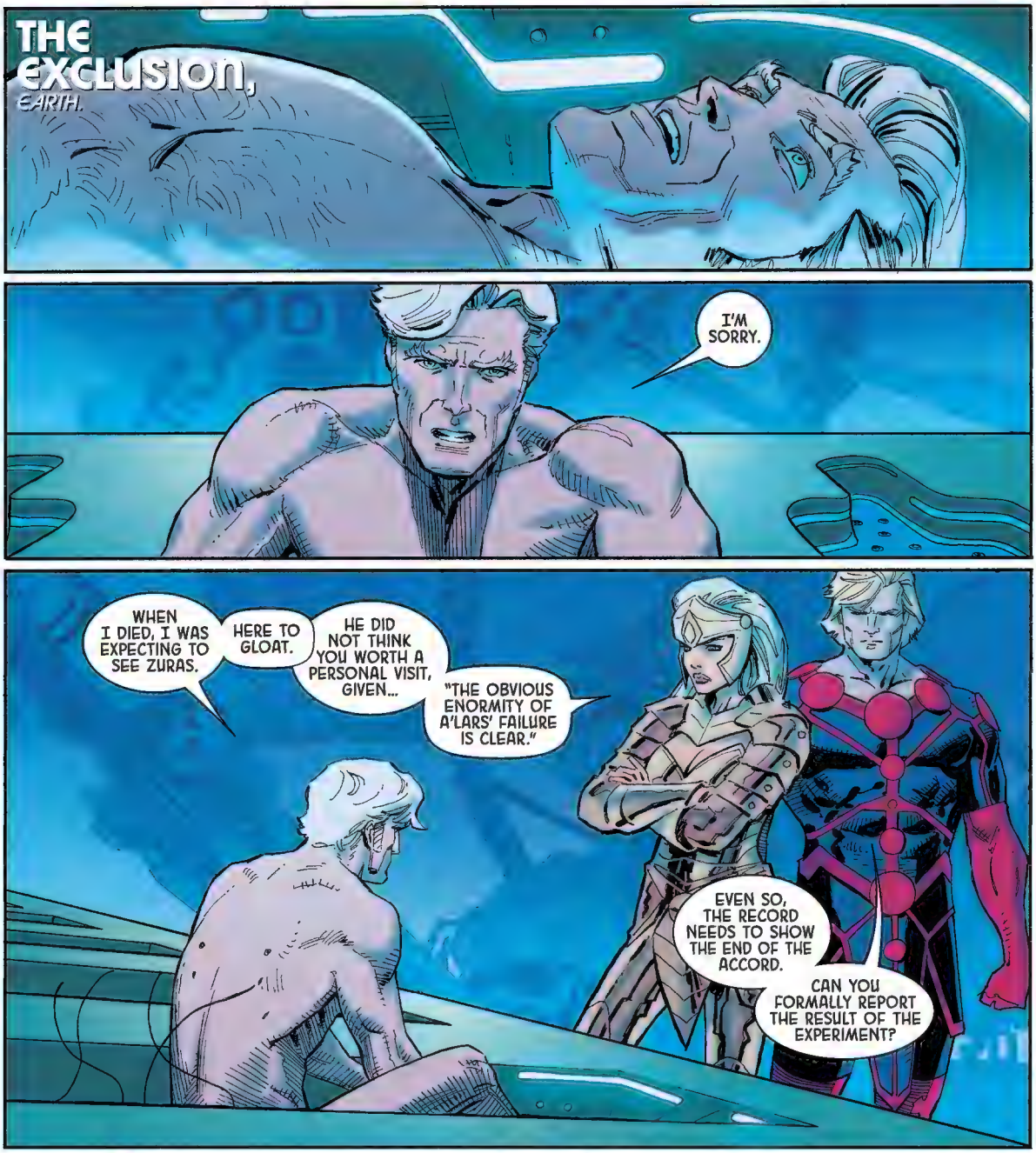
...EROS. FOR OUR LOVE.
HEH. MY THOUGHTS WENT ON SIMILAR LINES.

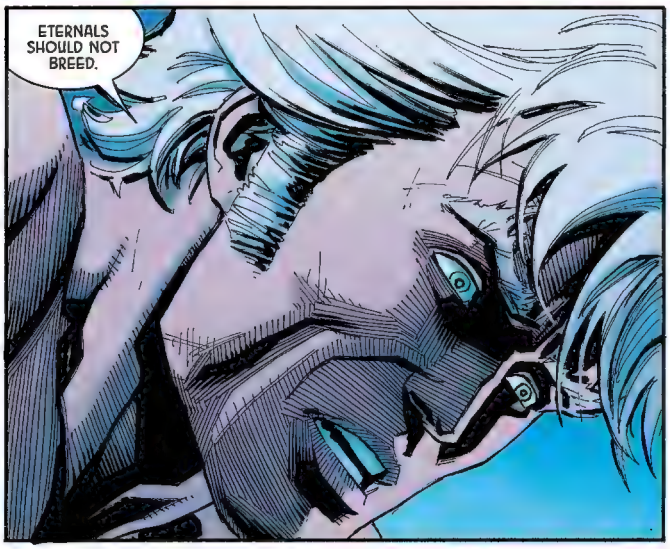

I WANTED TO CALL THE BOY *THANOS.*
OUR TRIUMPH OVER DEATH.

I LOVE IT.

SHE DID NOT LOVE IT.
AT ALL.
AND THANOS DID NOT LOVE HER.
SHE AWOKE IN THE EXCLUSION, SCREAMING, AND TOLD ME ALL ABOUT IT.
HERE LIES SUI-SAN
WIFE. MOTHER. MOST BEAUTIFUL OF ETERNALS

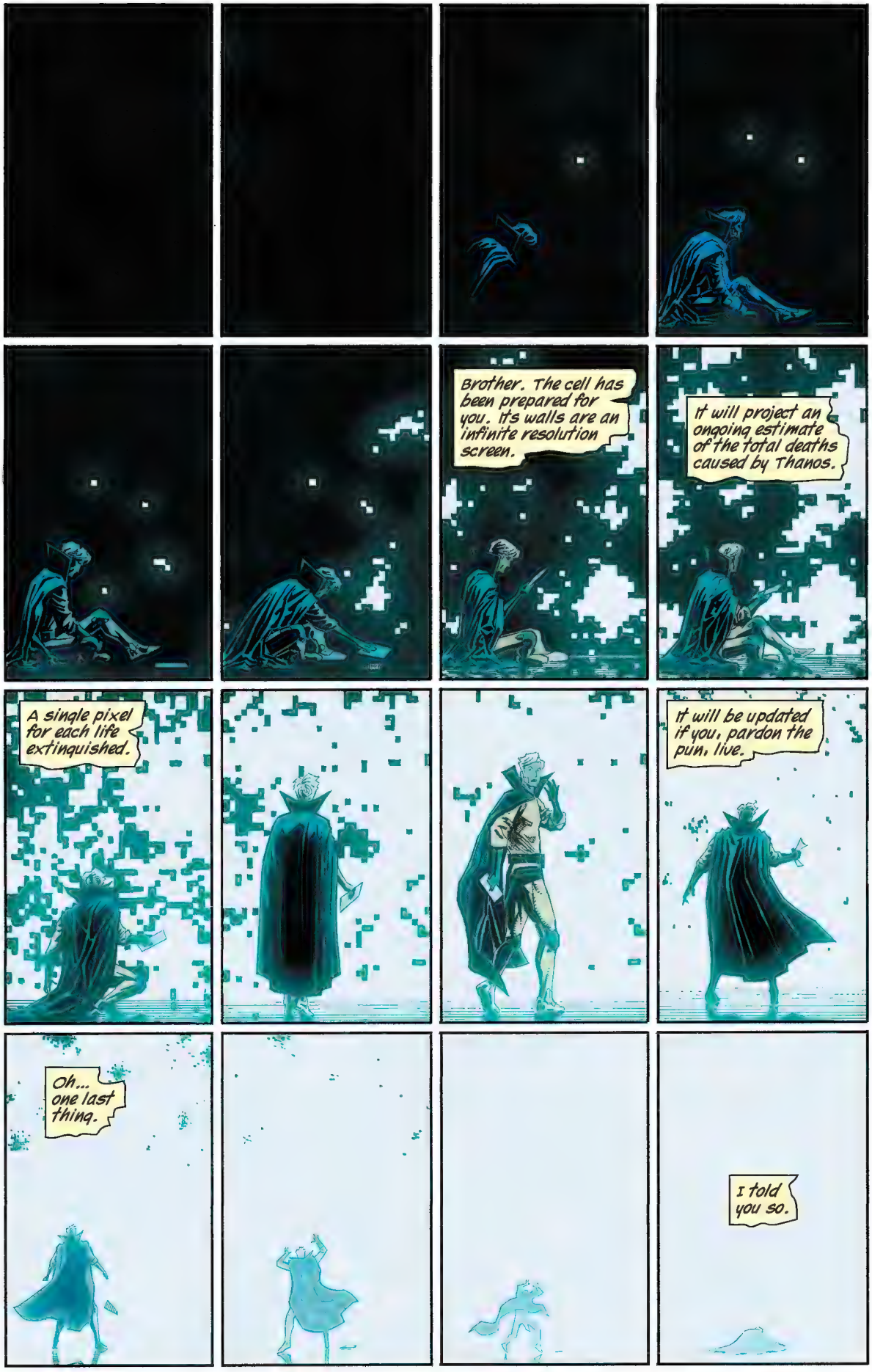
WHEN THE BOY'S NATURE BECAME UNDENIABLE, MENTOR TOOK IT BADLY. HE RETURNED THE RINGS.
KRONOS SAID THEY WOULD OPPOSE THANOS, ALWAYS.
AS IF OPPOSITION MATTERS IN THE SLIGHTEST.
MENTOR CONTINUED HIS WORK, TRYING TO FIND A WAY TO MAKE GOOD.
HE STILL LIVED, SO HE STILL HAD TIME.
ONCE MORE, HOPE.
IN MY EXPERIENCE, THE MOST PERSISTENT OF DELUSIONS.
I DID NOT KNOW ANY OF THIS THEN, OF COURSE.
I ONLY KNEW AFTER A'LARS FOUND HIS WAY HOME.
THANOS HELPED HIM ALONG THE WAY.

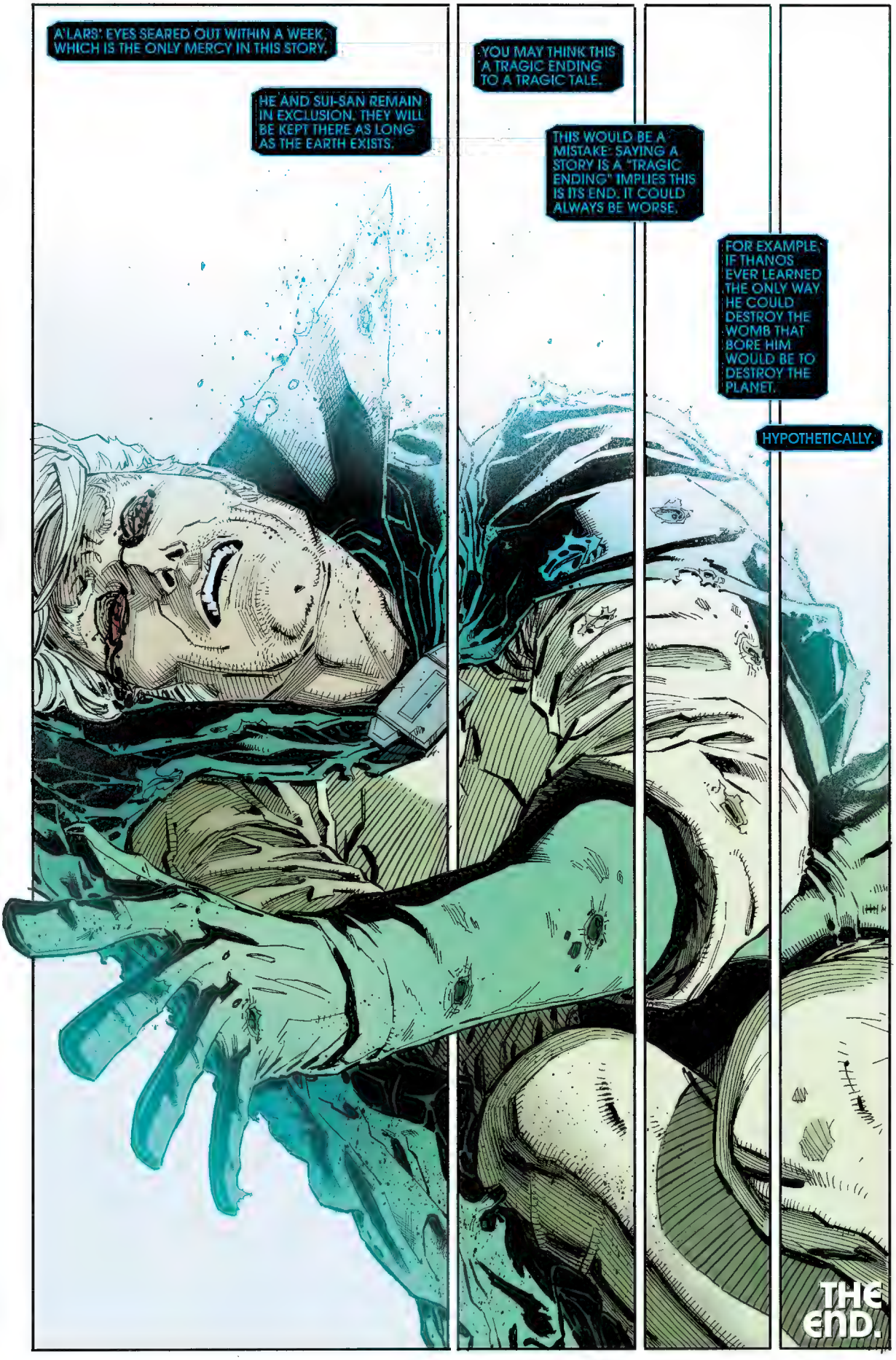

THE EXCLUSION,
EARTH.
I'M SORRY.
WHEN I DIED, I WAS EXPECTING TO SEE ZURAS.
HERE TO GLOAT.
HE DID NOT THINK YOU WORTH A PERSONAL VISIT, GIVEN...
"THE OBVIOUS ENORMITY OF A'LARS' FAILURE IS CLEAR."
EVEN SO, THE RECORD NEEDS TO SHOW THE END OF THE ACCORD.
CAN YOU FORMALLY REPORT THE RESULT OF THE EXPERIMENT?


ETERNALS SHOULD NOT BREED.

YOU ARE TO BE EXCLUDED.

MUST IT BE SO? COULD I NOT BE A CLEAN SLATE?
I KNOW MY MISTAKE-- I WOULD NOT REPEAT IT.
CYNICS WOULD SAY YOU WOULD CLEARLY CLAIM THAT...BUT THAT IS NOT WHAT THE UNI-MIND FEARS. IT IS NOT YOUR *IDEAS* THAT ARE THE PROBLEM, BUT YOUR VERY NATURE.
YOU COULD BREED ANOTHER THANOS. YOU COULD BE *FORCED* TO BREED.
NOT WITHOUT SUI-SAN AND... WHERE IS SHE?
WHERE IS SUI-SAN?
EXCLUDED ALSO, FOR THE SAME REASON. THE NEXT CELL.
CAN I...?
SHE DOES NOT WISH TO SPEAK TO YOU.
I ASKED, AND SHE SAID...
"IT WOULD BE BETTER IF WE HAD NEVER MET. MORE SO...
"...IT WOULD BE BETTER IF WE HAD NEVER *EXISTED.*"


Brother. The cell has been prepared for you. It's walls are an infinite resolution screen.
It will project an ongoing estimate of the total deaths caused by Thanos.
A single pixel for each life extinguished.
It will be updated if you, pardon the pun, live.
Oh... one last thing.
I told you so.


A'LARS' EYES SEARED OUT WITHIN A WEEK, WHICH IS THE ONLY MERCY IN THIS STORY.
HE AND SUI-SAN REMAIN IN EXCLUSION. THEY WILL BE KEPT THERE AS LONG AS THE EARTH EXISTS.
YOU MAY THINK THIS A TRAGIC ENDING TO A TRAGIC TALE.
THIS WOULD BE A MISTAKE. SAYING A STORY IS A "TRAGIC ENDING" IMPLIES THIS IS ITS END. IT COULD ALWAYS BE WORSE.
FOR EXAMPLE: IF THANOS EVER LEARNED THE ONLY WAY HE COULD DESTROY THE WOMB THAT BORE HIM WOULD BE TO DESTROY THE PLANET.
HYPOTHETICALLY.
THE END.

CELESTIA

ETERNALS
CELESTIA

A long, long time ago, alien space gods came to Earth.

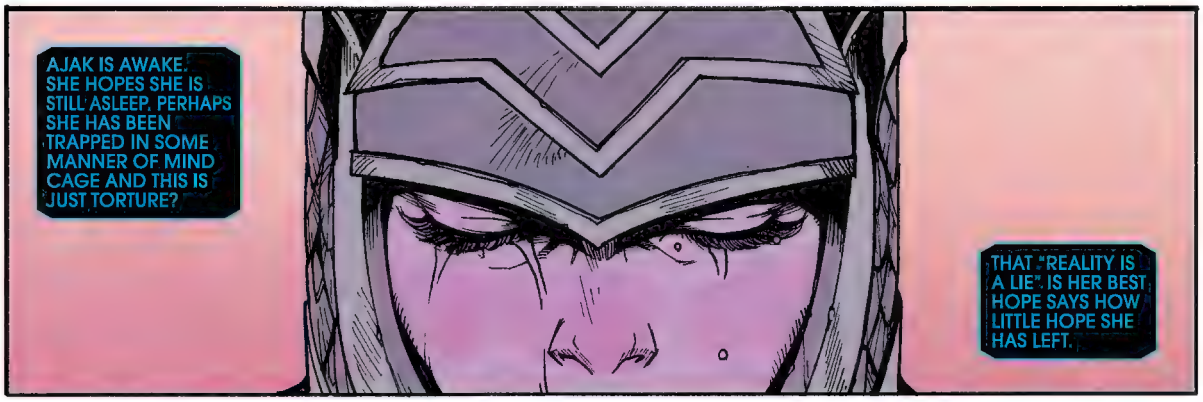
They made 100 Eternals.

They made 100 Deviants.

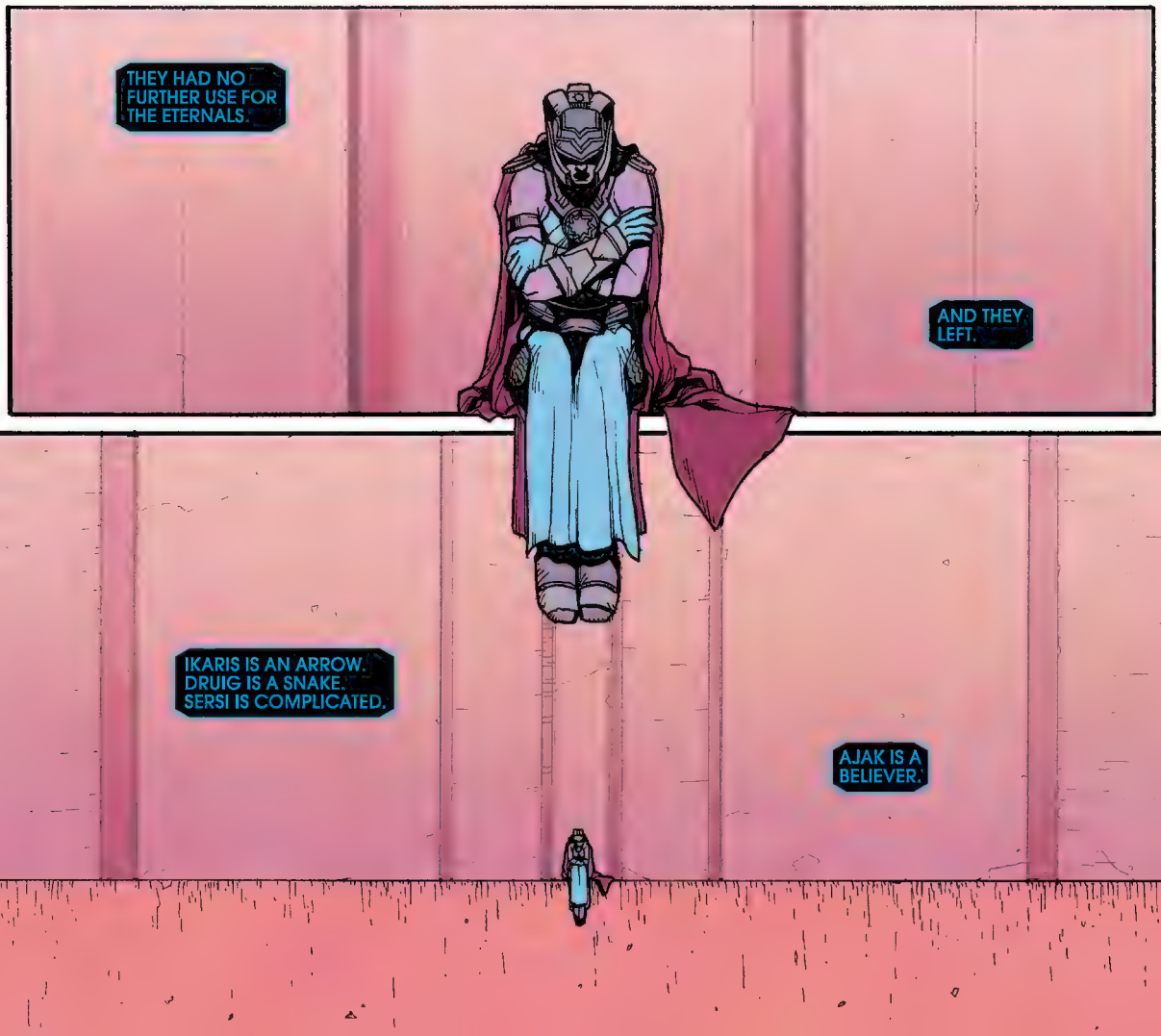
They left.

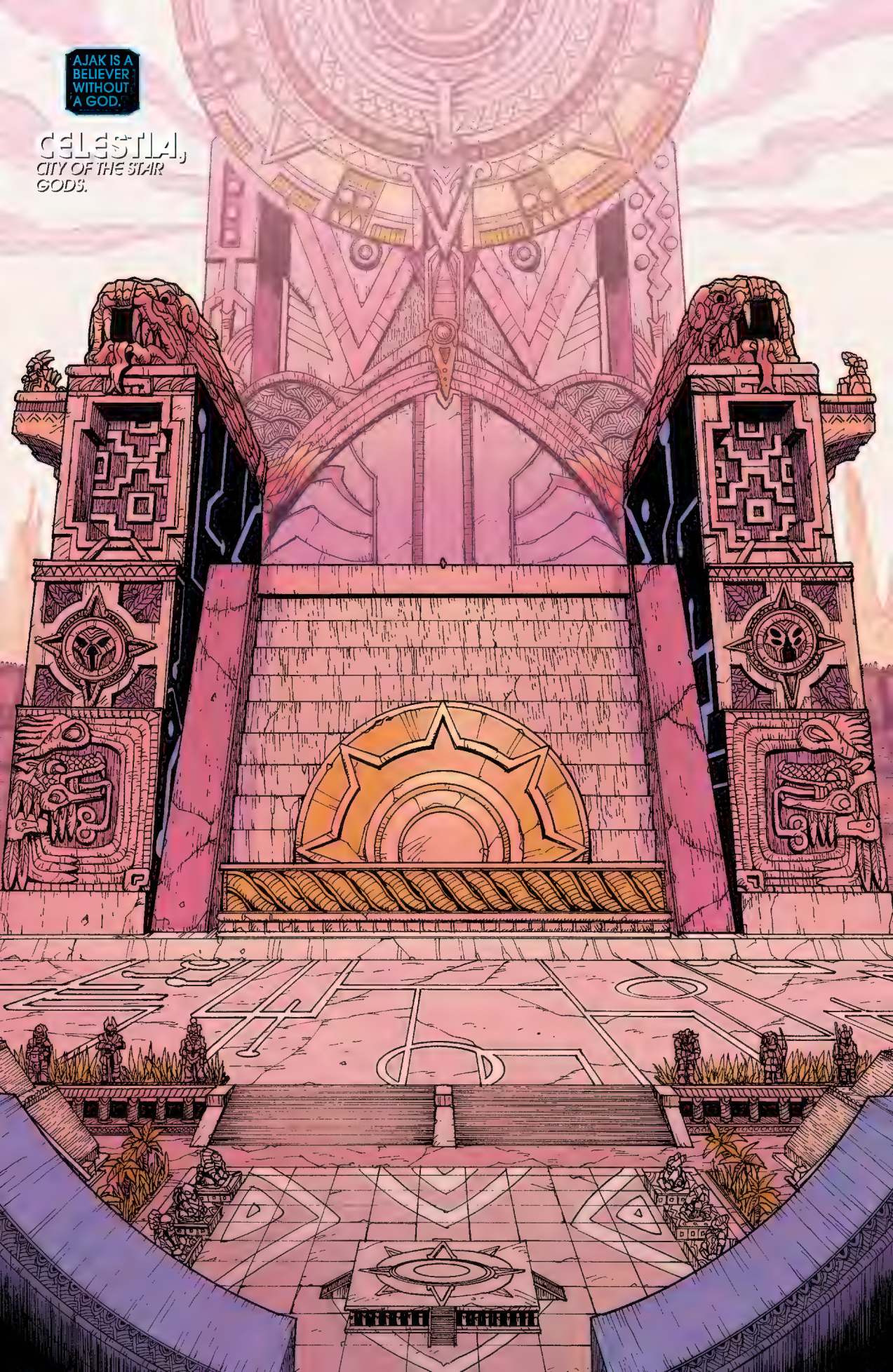
Everything since has been a complete lie.

A PILGRIM'S COMPLETE LACK OF PROGRESS


AJAK IS AWAKE. SHE HOPES SHE IS STILL ASLEEP. PERHAPS SHE HAS BEEN TRAPPED IN SOME MANNER OF MIND CAGE AND THIS IS JUST TORTURE?
THAT "REALITY IS A LIE" IS HER BEST HOPE SAYS HOW LITTLE HOPE SHE HAS LEFT.

AJAK IS A THEOLOGIAN. IN A SPECIES WHO IS ON FIRST-NAME TERMS WITH THEIR GODS, THIS IS A SIGNIFICANTLY LESS ACADEMIC CALLING.
SHE SPENT 999,995 OR SO YEARS AS THE PRIME INTERPRETER AND DIPLOMAT TO THEIR SPACE GODS.
AND THEN THE CELESTIALS SHUT UP. TO HER, AT LEAST... UNTIL A FINAL MESSAGE.

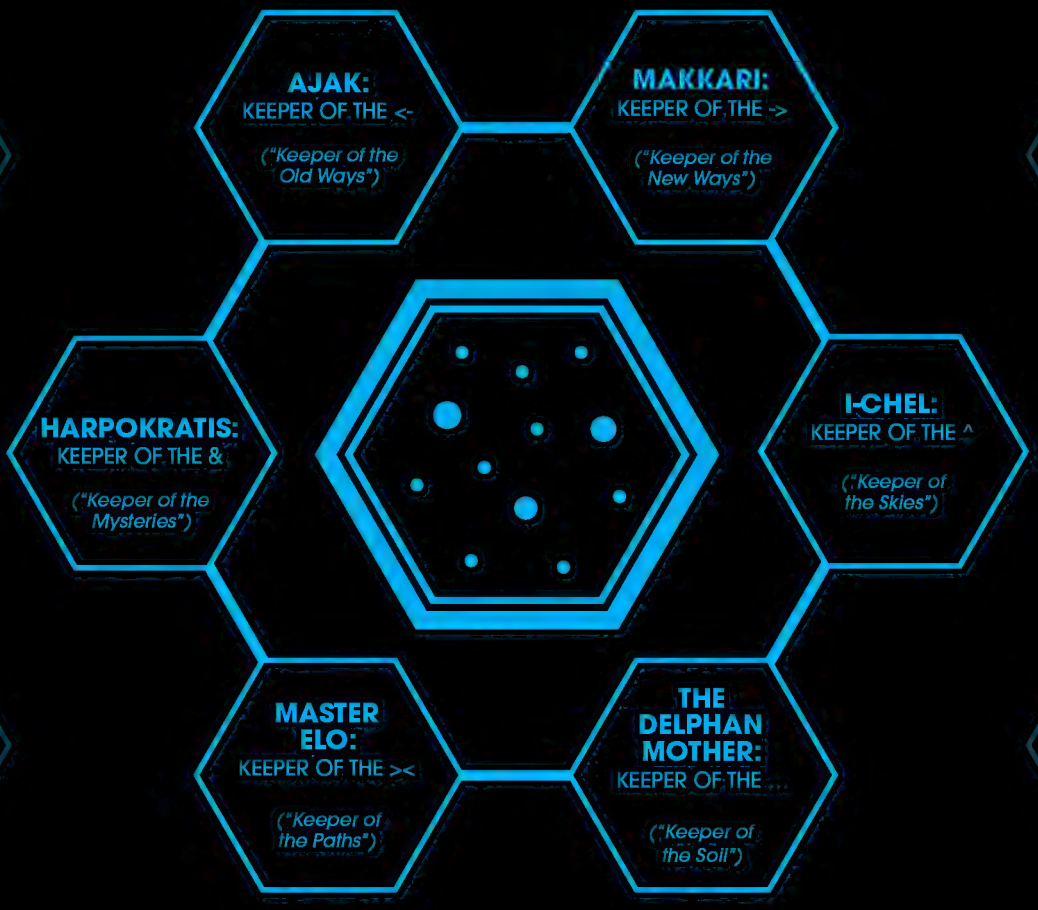

THEY HAD NO FURTHER USE FOR THE ETERNALS.
AND THEY LEFT.
IKARIS IS AN ARROW. DRUIG IS A SNAKE. SERSI IS COMPLICATED.
AJAK IS A BELIEVER.

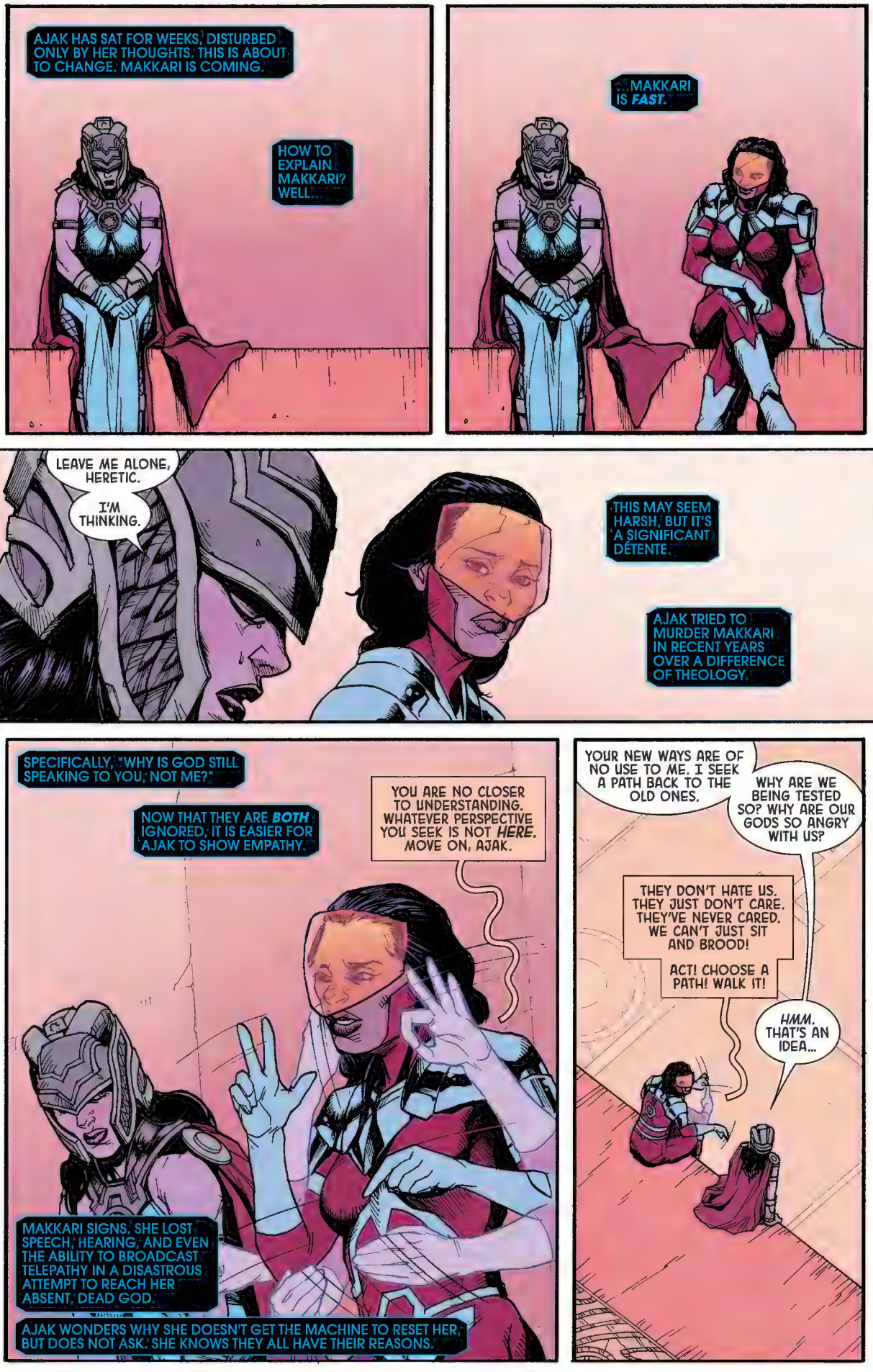

AJAK IS A BELIEVER WITHOUT A GOD.
CELESTIA, CITY OF THE STAR GODS.

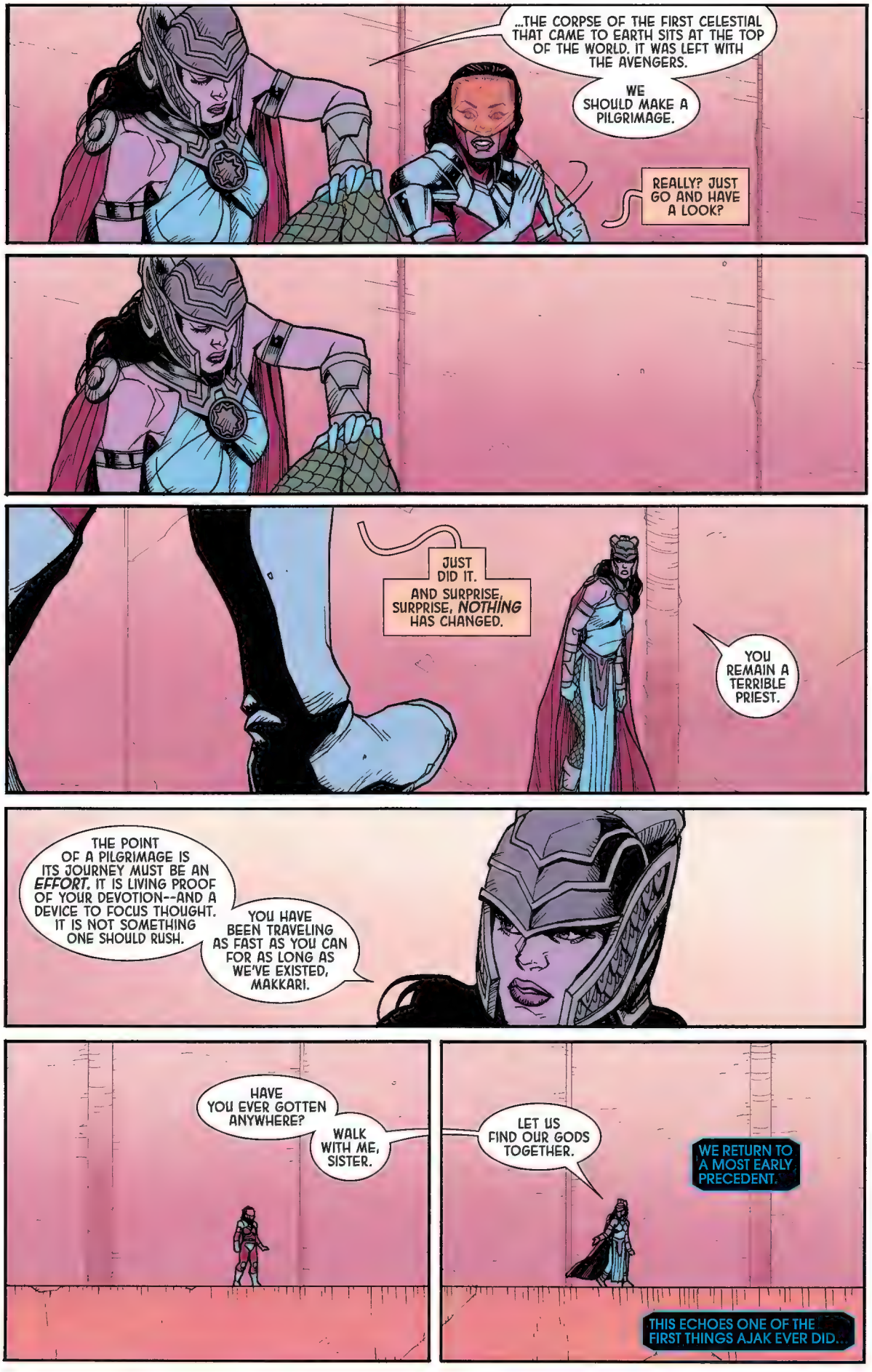
CELESTIA: CITY OF THE STAR GODS

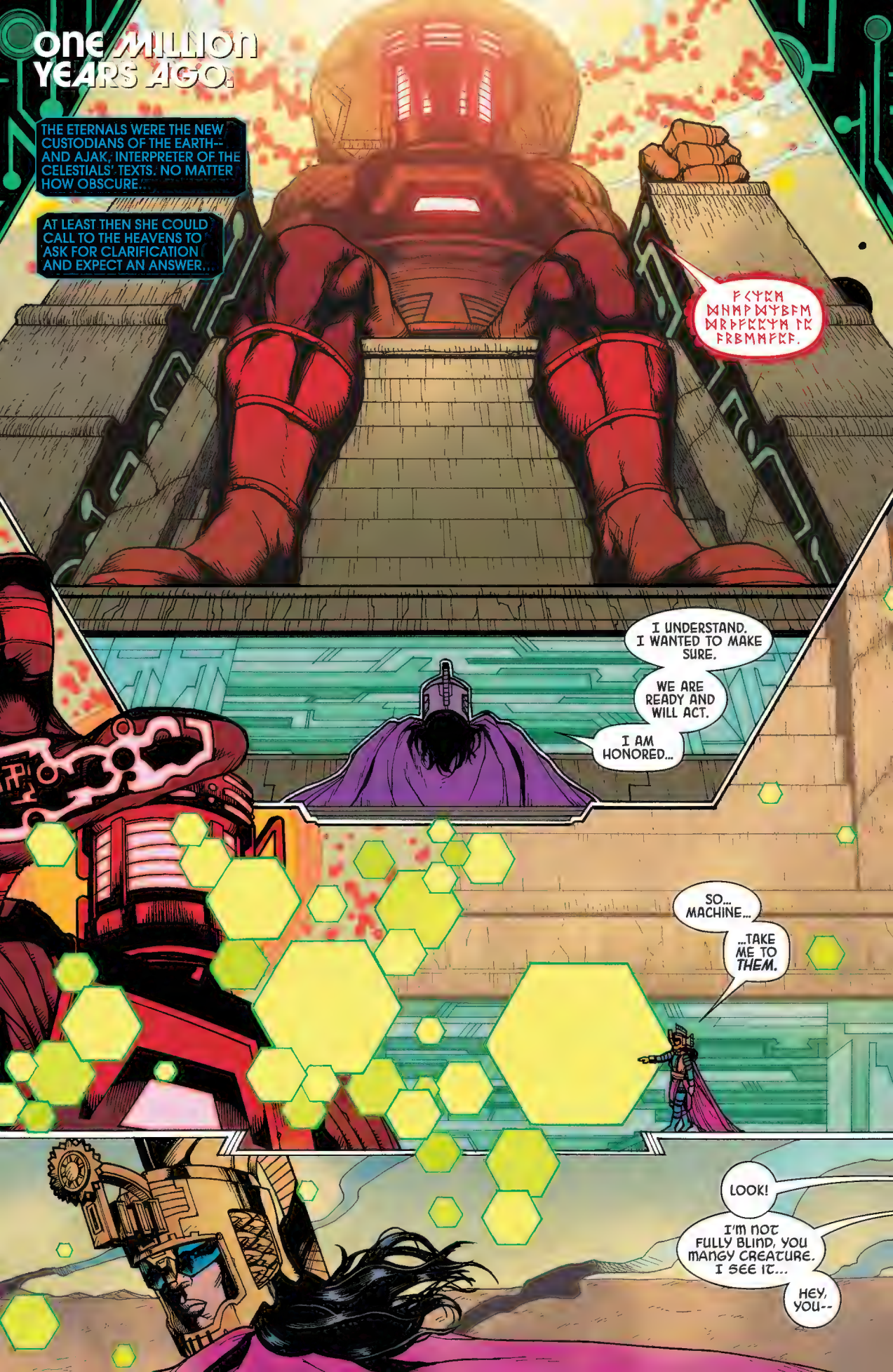
One of the six Eternal Cities of Earth. It is designed to house a Celestial if they visit. It is also the primary site of Eternal spirituality and what they count as their religion.

That the Celestials have abandoned the Eternals means the Priests of Celestia are undergoing a period of intense philosophical self-examination.




AJAK HAS SAT FOR WEEKS, DISTURBED ONLY BY HER THOUGHTS. THIS IS ABOUT TO CHANGE. MAKKARI IS COMING.
HOW TO EXPLAIN MAKKARI? WELL...
MAKKARI IS *FAST.*
LEAVE ME ALONE, HERETIC.
I'M THINKING.
THIS MAY SEEM HARSH, BUT IT'S A SIGNIFICANT DÉTENTE.
AJAK TRIED TO MURDER MAKKARI IN RECENT YEARS OVER A DIFFERENCE OF THEOLOGY.
SPECIFICALLY, "WHY IS GOD STILL SPEAKING TO YOU; NOT ME?"
NOW THAT THEY ARE *BOTH* IGNORED, IT IS EASIER FOR AJAK TO SHOW EMPATHY.
YOU ARE NO CLOSER TO UNDERSTANDING. WHATEVER PERSPECTIVE YOU SEEK IS NOT *HERE.* MOVE ON, AJAK.
MAKKARI SIGNS. SHE LOST SPEECH, HEARING, AND EVEN THE ABILITY TO BROADCAST TELEPATHY IN A DISASTROUS ATTEMPT TO REACH HER ABSENT, DEAD GOD.
AJAK WONDERS WHY SHE DOESN'T GET THE MACHINE TO RESET HER, BUT DOES NOT ASK. SHE KNOWS THEY ALL HAVE THEIR REASONS.
YOUR NEW WAYS ARE OF NO USE TO ME. I SEEK A PATH BACK TO THE OLD ONES.
WHY ARE WE BEING TESTED SO? WHY ARE OUR GODS SO ANGRY WITH US?
THEY DON'T HATE US. THEY JUST DON'T CARE. THEY'VE NEVER CARED. WE CAN'T JUST SIT AND BROOD!
ACT! CHOOSE A PATH! WALK IT!
HMM. THAT'S AN IDEA...


...THE CORPSE OF THE FIRST CELESTIAL THAT CAME TO EARTH SITS AT THE TOP OF THE WORLD. IT WAS LEFT WITH THE AVENGERS.
WE SHOULD MAKE A PILGRIMAGE.
REALLY? JUST GO AND HAVE A LOOK?
JUST DID IT.
AND SURPRISE, SURPRISE, NOTHING HAS CHANGED.
YOU REMAIN A TERRIBLE PRIEST.
THE POINT OF A PILGRIMAGE IS ITS JOURNEY MUST BE AN EFFORT. IT IS LIVING PROOF OF YOUR DEVOTION--AND A DEVICE TO FOCUS THOUGHT. IT IS NOT SOMETHING ONE SHOULD RUSH.
YOU HAVE BEEN TRAVELING AS FAST AS YOU CAN FOR AS LONG AS WE'VE EXISTED, MAKKARI.
HAVE YOU EVER GOTTEN ANYWHERE?
WALK WITH ME, SISTER.
LET US FIND OUR GODS TOGETHER.
WE RETURN TO A MOST EARLY PRECEDENT.
THIS ECHOES ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS AJAK EVER DID...


ONE MILLION YEARS AGO.
THE ETERNALS WERE THE NEW CUSTODIANS OF THE EARTH--AND AJAK, INTERPRETER OF THE CELESTIALS' TEXTS. NO MATTER HOW OBSCURE...
AT LEAST THEN SHE COULD CALL TO THE HEAVENS TO ASK FOR CLARIFICATION AND EXPECT AN ANSWER...
I UNDERSTAND. I WANTED TO MAKE SURE.
WE ARE READY AND WILL ACT.
I AM HONORED...
SO... MACHINE...
...TAKE ME TO THEM.
LOOK!
I'M NOT FULLY BLIND, YOU MANGY CREATURE. I SEE IT...
HEY, YOU--

THE AVENGERS OF 1,000,000 BCE.
...WHAT IN HEL'S NAME ARE YOU?
HMM.

SO... HOW DOES THIS WORK?
YOU WALK.
I'M NOT SURE I APPROVE OF "WALKING."
MAKKARI HAS BEEN A PRIEST FOR A SCANT FEW YEARS. SHE BECAME A PROPHET WHEN A CELESTIAL SPOKE TO HER AND HER ALONE.
THE GLORIOUS DREAMING CELESTIAL TOLD OF A NEW COVENANT BETWEEN ETERNAL AND DEVIANT, CELESTIAL AND MAN.
WHEN THE DREAMING CELESTIAL TRULY RETURNED, THEY WOULD ALL BE FREE.
MAKKARI BROUGHT THE ETERNALS THE GOOD NEWS AND TOLD THEM TO WAIT FOR THIS NEW AGE.
THEN A SERIES OF THE X-MEN'S ANTAGONISTS CHOPPED UP THE DREAMING CELESTIAL AND USED IT AS PARTS.
I SEARCHED THROUGH THE DETRITUS, LOOKING FOR THE SMALLEST PART OF IT.
THEY DESTROYED HIM. THEY DISMEMBERED MY GOD.
THIS IS A TEST. THIS IS ALL A TEST.
THEY WANT US TO THINK ALL WAYS ARE DONE-- BOTH MY OLD WAYS AND YOUR NEW ONES.
I DO NOT THINK SO. IT WAS HELL, BUT I HAVE COME TO A DIFFERENT UNDERSTANDING.
NO MATTER HOW PAINFUL, EVERYTHING IS A LESSON.
AND IN THIS, FOR ONCE, AJAK AGREES.

...EVEN A MILLION YEARS AGO, AJAK WAS NOT AFRAID TO LEARN FROM PAIN.
I AM AJAK OF THE ETERNALS. I COME TO YOU, THE AVENGERS...
I WAS CREATED BY THE CELESTIALS--
HOW RUDE, THINKS AJAK.
THEY DIDN'T EVEN LET HER FINISH HER PROVOCATION.
THE STARBRAND CREATURE HAD HEARD ENOUGH.
"CELESTIALS."
AJAK DID NOT COME UNPREPARED. SHE ACTIVATES A CONDUIT...
I ANSWER AND VENT THE PRIMAL ENERGIES OF THE MACHINE.
EVEN FOR A STARBRAND, IT HURTS.
AJAK SUSPECTED THIS WOULD HAPPEN: THE CELESTIALS NEARLY KILLED THESE BEINGS. THE SERVANTS OF THE STAR GODS ARE NO FRIENDS OF THEIRS.
THIS IS BECAUSE... OH, ONE SECOND.

THE RELEVANT HISTORY

4 BILLION YEARS AGO:

Arrival of a diseased Celestial, the Progenitor. It dies and gives birth to all that is strange on Earth via its pus and vomit. Ugh. I feel dirty.

4 BILLION YEARS AGO TO 1 MILLION YEARS AGO:

A quiet time for relevant history.

1 MILLION YEARS AGO:

Zgreb the Aspirant arrives to investigate the missing Celestial. Zgreb becomes infected and lashes out in pain. Earth's mightiest heroes engage the Celestial and, given its injured state, manage to kill it.

ALSO 1 MILLION YEARS AGO:

The First Host of Celestials arrives to investigate Zgreb's disappearance. Earth's mightiest heroes engage the Celestials and are pummeled. The Celestials realize this is a plague planet.

They do several things...

- They realize this planet may eventually create antibodies against the disease via its powered inhabitants.
- They create the Eternals to defend the process. The Eternals are unaware this is their true purpose.
- They leave.

1 MILLION YEARS AGO TO 6 MONTHS AGO:

Another quiet time for relevant history.

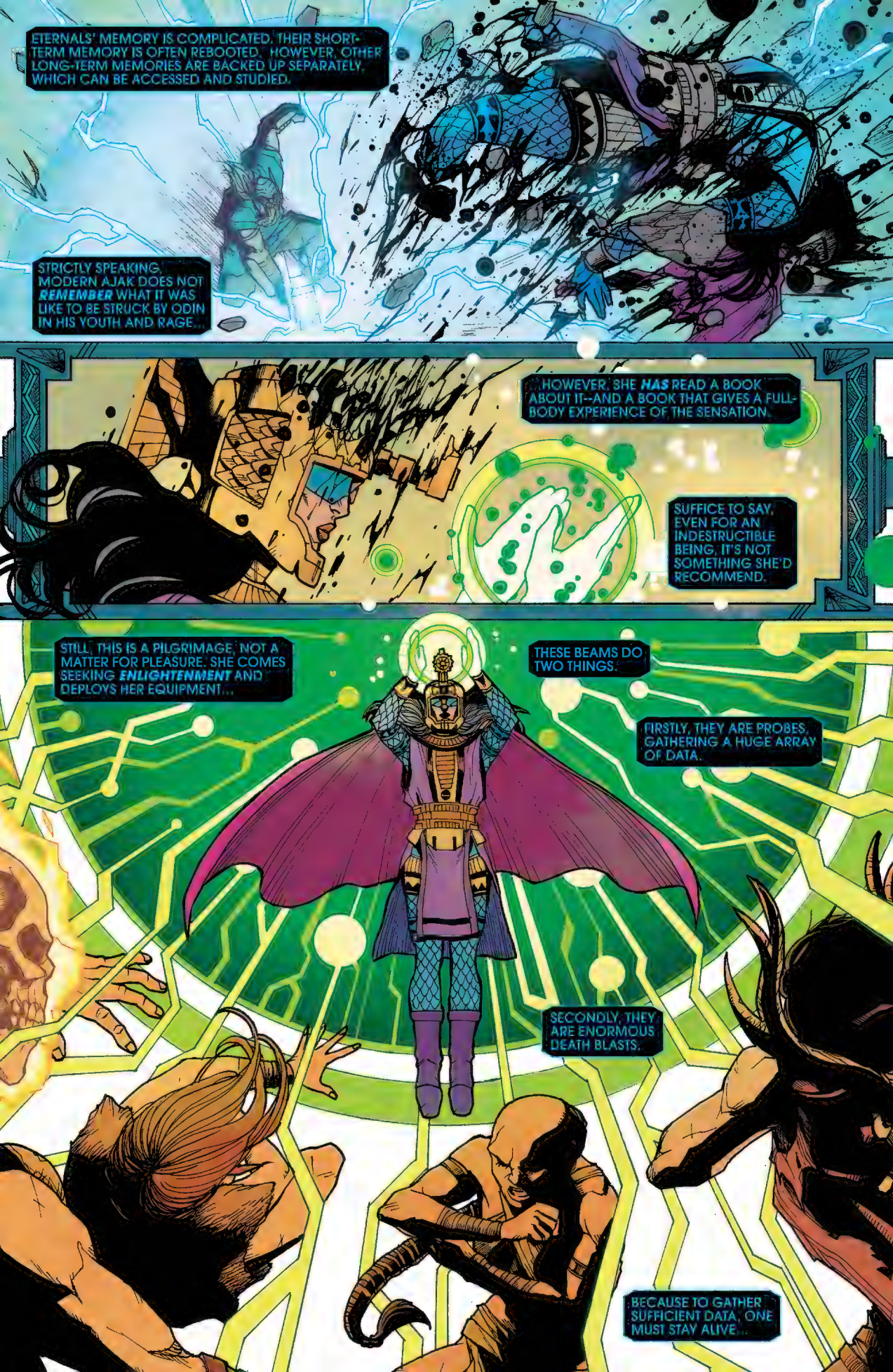
6 MONTHS AGO:

The Final Host arrives. The Eternals realize their true purpose was just to be a lid on the petri dish. The Eternals commit mass suicide in horror.

1 MONTH AGO:

The Machine reboots. As Ikaris noted, "We're feeling much better now."

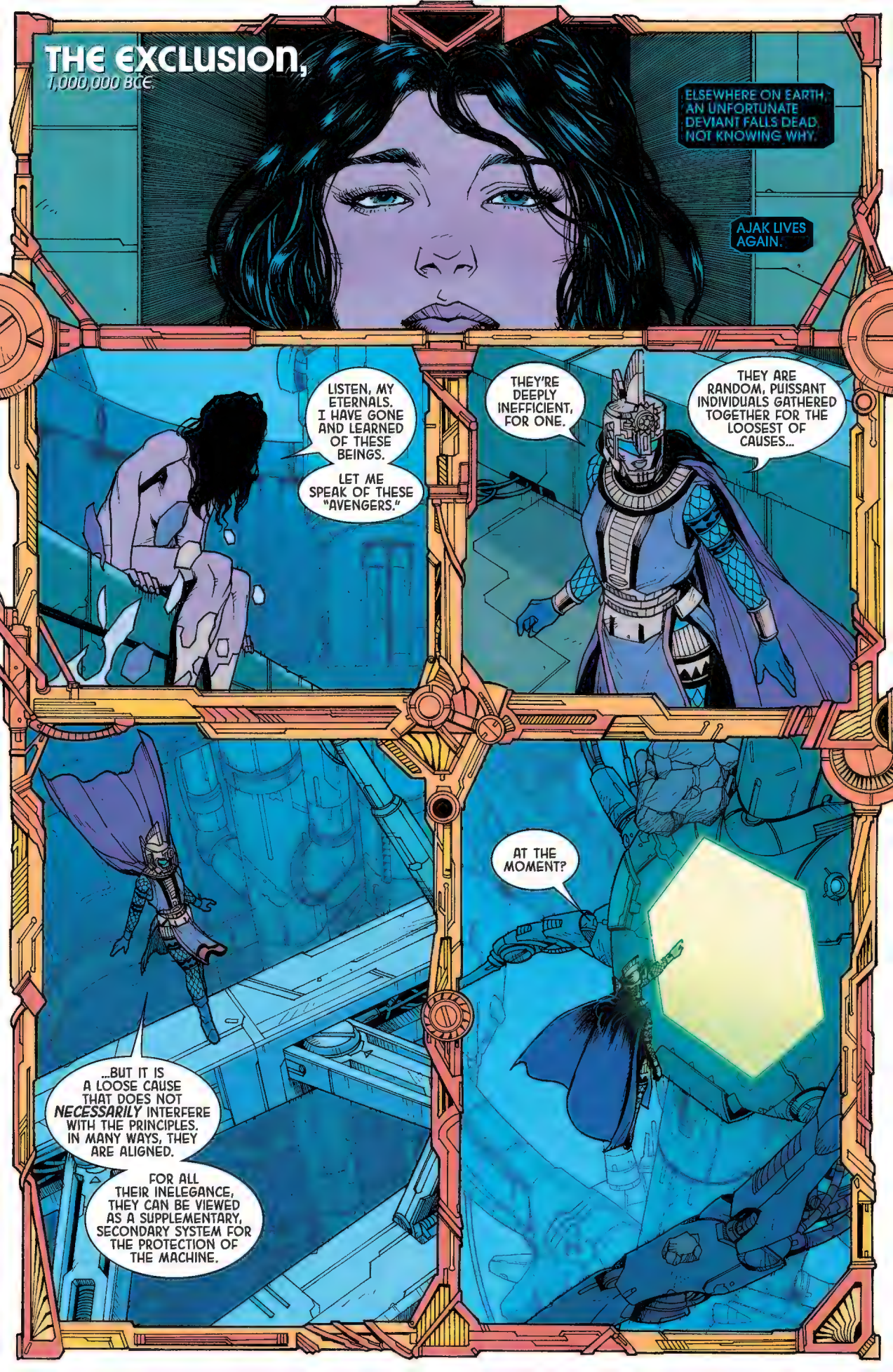
For further details, see issues #1-6 of Avengers (2018) *by the human historians Jason Aaron and Ed McGuinness.*

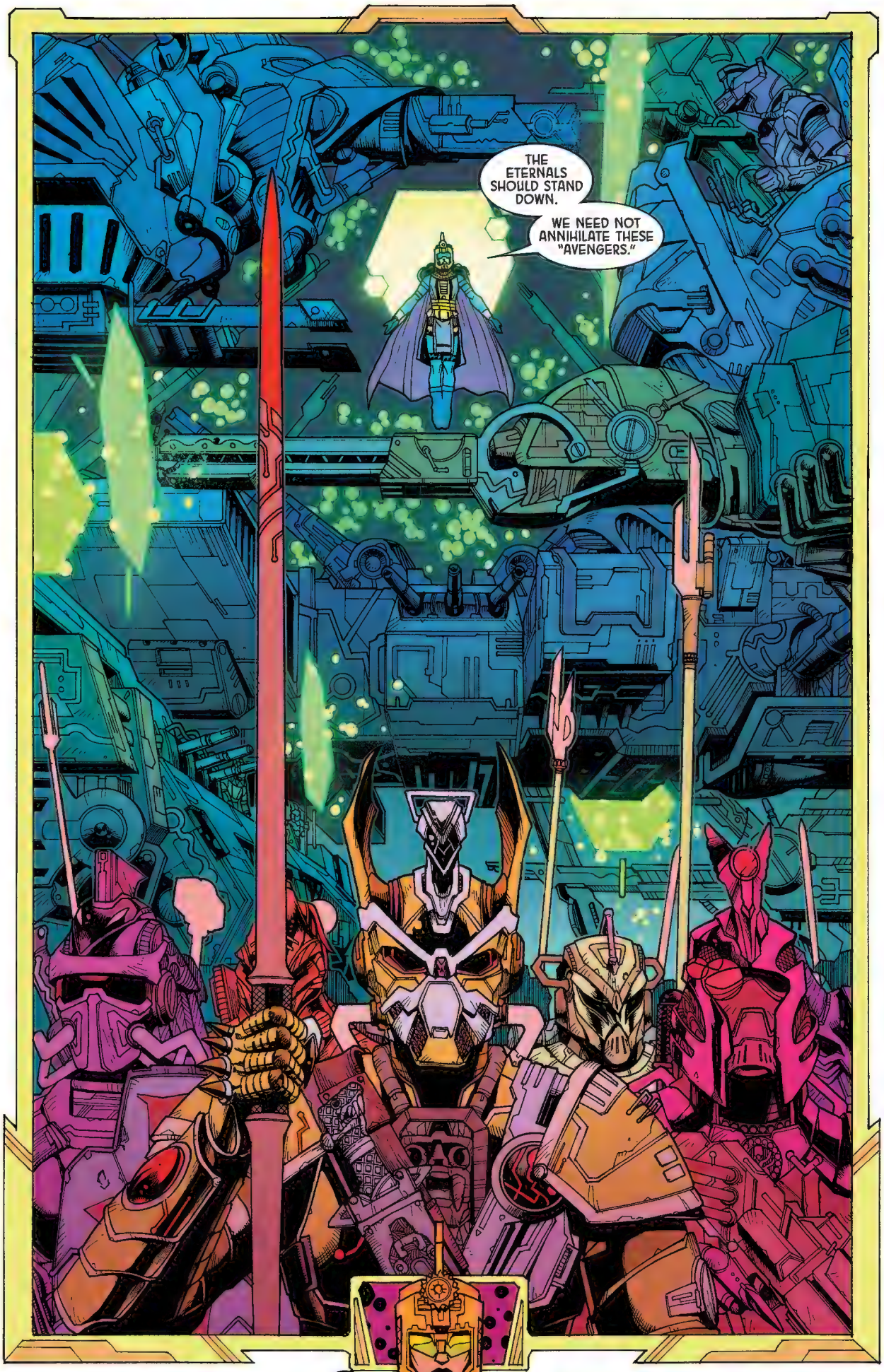

ETERNALS' MEMORY IS COMPLICATED. THEIR SHORT-TERM MEMORY IS OFTEN REBOOTED. HOWEVER, OTHER LONG-TERM MEMORIES ARE BACKED UP SEPARATELY, WHICH CAN BE ACCESSED AND STUDIED.
STRICTLY SPEAKING, MODERN AJAK DOES NOT *REMEMBER* WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO BE STRUCK BY ODIN IN HIS YOUTH AND RAGE...
...HOWEVER, SHE *HAS* READ A BOOK ABOUT IT--AND A BOOK THAT GIVES A FULL-BODY EXPERIENCE OF THE SENSATION.
SUFFICE TO SAY, EVEN FOR AN INDESTRUCTIBLE BEING, IT'S NOT SOMETHING SHE'D RECOMMEND.
STILL, THIS IS A PILGRIMAGE, NOT A MATTER FOR PLEASURE. SHE COMES SEEKING *ENLIGHTENMENT* AND DEPLOYS HER EQUIPMENT...
THESE BEAMS DO TWO THINGS.
FIRSTLY, THEY ARE PROBES, GATHERING A HUGE ARRAY OF DATA.
SECONDLY, THEY ARE ENORMOUS DEATH BLASTS.
BECAUSE TO GATHER SUFFICIENT DATA, ONE MUST STAY ALIVE...

THIS WILL NOT BE EASY. HER FOES ARE SIGNIFICANT...
ODIN. AN "ALL-FATHER" CLASS GOD-BEING IN AN ADOLESCENT STAGE.
THE PHOENIX. AN AVATAR OF ONE OF THE PRIMORDIAL COSMIC POWERS OF LIFE.
THE PLANETARY DEFENSE SYSTEM KNOWN AS "STARBRAND"...
THESE ARE PLAYERS WHO ARE WELL UNDERSTOOD ON THE COSMIC SCALE THAT AJAK'S GENETIC EDUCATION SPECIALIZES IN.
THEY ARE PETRIFYING.
SHE FIRST THINKS THE OTHERS AS PLAYERS OF SMALLER STRENGTH... BEFORE SHE REALIZES THEY ARE ON *DIFFERENT* SCALES.
TRUE MAGIC IS ALWAYS THE ETERNALS' WEAKEST SPOT, AND THIS ENTITY APPEARS TO BE SOME MANNER OF PINNACLE SORCERER OF THE REALITY. AJAK STARTS A NEW CLASSIFICATION FOR THE LIBRARY: "SORCERER SUPREME."
DESPITE ITS WEAK HUMANOID BODY, THIS IS A *SIGNIFICANT* BEING.
THE REST?

IRON FIST. A CHI-ENERGY-ENHANCED DEFENDER STRIKES WITH A STRING OF BLOWS, WHICH AJAK RECORDS AS {54a75B01}, {7sabbB}, AND A RISING {0101}.
BLACK PANTHER. A PRECURSOR-SPIRIT PIONEER, WHO HAS ALREADY CLAIMED AN AREA OF EARTH'S AFTERLIFE AS THE DOMAIN FOR ITS FUTURE ANCESTORS.
AND A GHOST RIDER. A VENGEANCE SPIRIT OF HELL. THIS GIVES AJAK PAUSE.
DEALS WITH DEMONICS NEVER TURN OUT WELL.
YOU MAY AS WELL HAVE A DEVIANT ON THE TEAM.
AJAK FEELS HER MOLECULES DISASSEMBLE, BUT SHE IS PLEASED. HER INTEGRITY HELD LONG ENOUGH.
SHE HAS SUFFICIENT DATA.
DEATH IS A GREAT TEACHER.

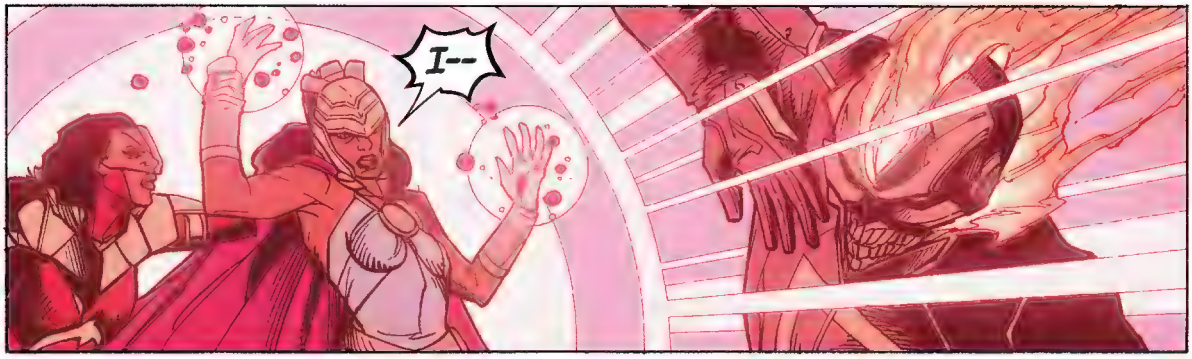
...AS LONG AS YOU GET TO BE AROUND AFTERWARD.
I *MOURNED* THE DREAMING CELESTIAL. I HAD NO HOPE. AND THEN CAME THE AWFUL TRUTH--WE WERE NOTHING BUT NURSEMAIDS FOR THE HUMANS.
I DESPAIRED... BUT THEN I *UNDERSTOOD.*
YOUR GODS MADE US, CHAINED US TO A TASK, AND NOW HAVE ABANDONED US. WE OWE THEM NOTHING.
I HAVE SEEN *MY* GOD USED IN PARTS FOR STRANGE CLONES' SCHEMES.
WE HAVE NO GOD. THERE IS A GAP, A HOLE IN HEAVEN...
ONCE, I READ A HUMAN BOOK. I LIKED IT SO MUCH I READ IT FORTY TIMES IN FORTY SECONDS.
IN IT, A MAN MAKES NEW LIFE FROM PARTS OF THE DEAD...
I THINK OF WHAT HAPPENED TO THE DREAMING CELESTIAL, AND...
...I THINK WE SHOULD *MAKE* OUR GOD. THEN OUR GOD CAN REMAKE *US.*
THEN GOD AND ETERNAL CAN WRITE A NEW COVENANT TOGETHER... AND A FUTURE.
JOIN ME.
YOU MAKE GOOD POINTS, MAKKARI.
I WILL THINK AS I WALK.


THE EXCLUSION,
1,000,000 BCE
ELSEWHERE ON EARTH, AN UNFORTUNATE DEVIANT FALLS DEAD, NOT KNOWING WHY.
AJAK LIVES AGAIN.
LISTEN, MY ETERNALS. I HAVE GONE AND LEARNED OF THESE BEINGS.
LET ME SPEAK OF THESE "AVENGERS."
THEY'RE DEEPLY INEFFICIENT, FOR ONE.
THEY ARE RANDOM, PUISSANT INDIVIDUALS GATHERED TOGETHER FOR THE LOOSEST OF CAUSES...
AT THE MOMENT?
...BUT IT IS A LOOSE CAUSE THAT DOES NOT NECESSARILY INTERFERE WITH THE PRINCIPLES. IN MANY WAYS, THEY ARE ALIGNED.
FOR ALL THEIR INELEGANCE, THEY CAN BE VIEWED AS A SUPPLEMENTARY, SECONDARY SYSTEM FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE MACHINE.


THE ETERNALS SHOULD STAND DOWN.
WE NEED NOT ANNIHILATE THESE "AVENGERS."

AVENGERS MOUNTAIN.
WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO MY BEAUTIFUL GOD?!
AJAK...BE CAREFUL. YOU'RE TOO ANGRY.
THEY HAVE CARVED HOLES THROUGH THE DIVINE CELESTIAL!
THIS IS BLASPHEMY!
RETURN OUR GOD UNTO US!
HEY! LOUD LADY!
ER... IS THERE A PROBLEM?

YOU ARE NESTLING INSIDE THE CORPSE OF OUR GOD! WHAT GIVES YOU THE RIGHT?
YOU WILL LEAVE THE TEMPLE, OR I WILL DRIVE YOU FORTH! YOU WILL BE DEAD, APE CREATURE.
HEY! I REALLY CAN EXPLAIN EVERYTHING!
I'LL JUST BE RIGHT DOWN!
OKAY, I'M-- ER--GHOST RIDER. I--
I KNOW WHAT YOU ARE.
YOU ARE A SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE. THE RIDER OF THE DAMNED...
OH, YOU KNOW WHO I AM. I... WELL, YOU'RE ONE UP ON ME.
ANYWAY, WE'RE ALLOWED IN HERE. THE CELESTIALS TOLD ME IT WAS FINE. NICE GUYS, FOR 2,000-FOOT SPACE GODS, I GUESS.
YOU LIE.
AJAK'S TELEPATHY SNAPS OUT LIKE A WHIP...
THEY WANT TO LEAVE US A GIFT. THE PROGENITOR, THE FIRST CELESTIAL TO EVER VISIT THE EARTH, THE ONE WHOSE DEATH GAVE BIRTH TO US ALL. THEY CAN'T BRING IT BACK TO LIFE AFTER SO LONG, BUT...
SHINING LIKE A BEACON AT THE TOP OF THE WORLD IT HELPED FORGE-- A BEACON OF HOPE AND OF THE WONDERS OF LIFE.
...THEY DON'T WANT IT TO BE BURIED ANYMORE. IT BELONGS IN THE SUN.
AND A WARNING ABOUT WHAT'LL HAPPEN IF ANYONE TRIES TO STOMP THOSE OUT.
YOU *DON'T* LIE. THEY SPOKE TO YOU.
SEE! IT'S FINE TO BE HERE.
I HAVE SERVED THEM FOR A MILLION YEARS.
I HAVE PORED OVER THE MEANING OF THEIR EVERY BREATH.
NOW THEY IGNORE ME.
AND THEY SPOKE.
TO *YOU.*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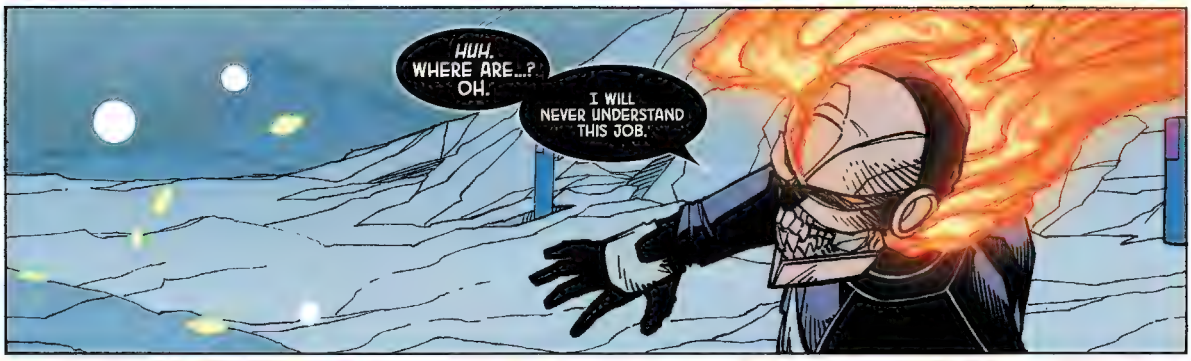
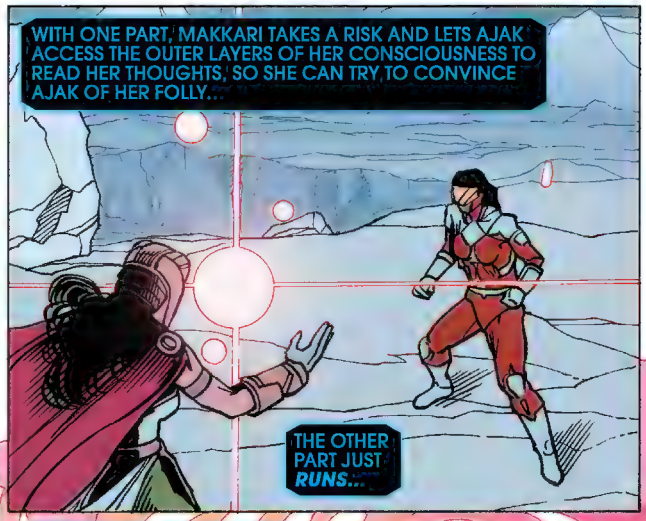
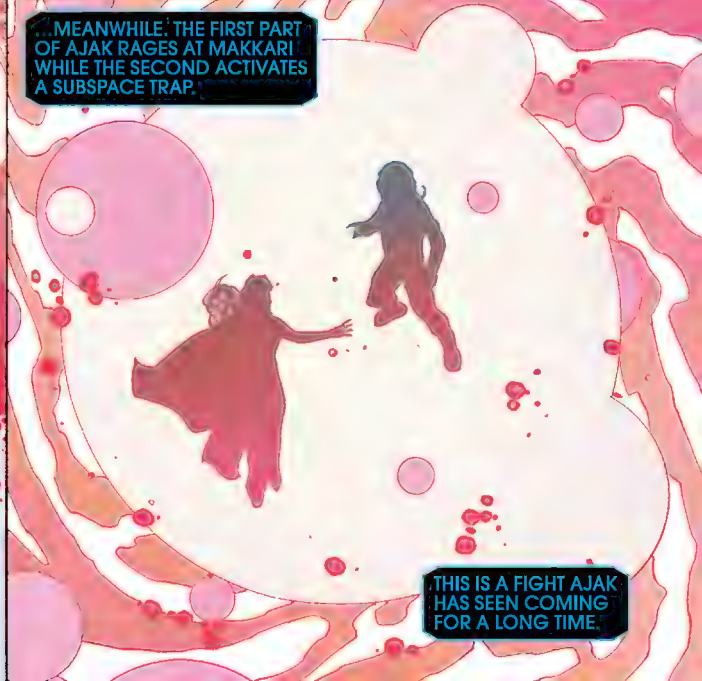

HUH. WHERE ARE...? OH.
I WILL NEVER UNDERSTAND THIS JOB.

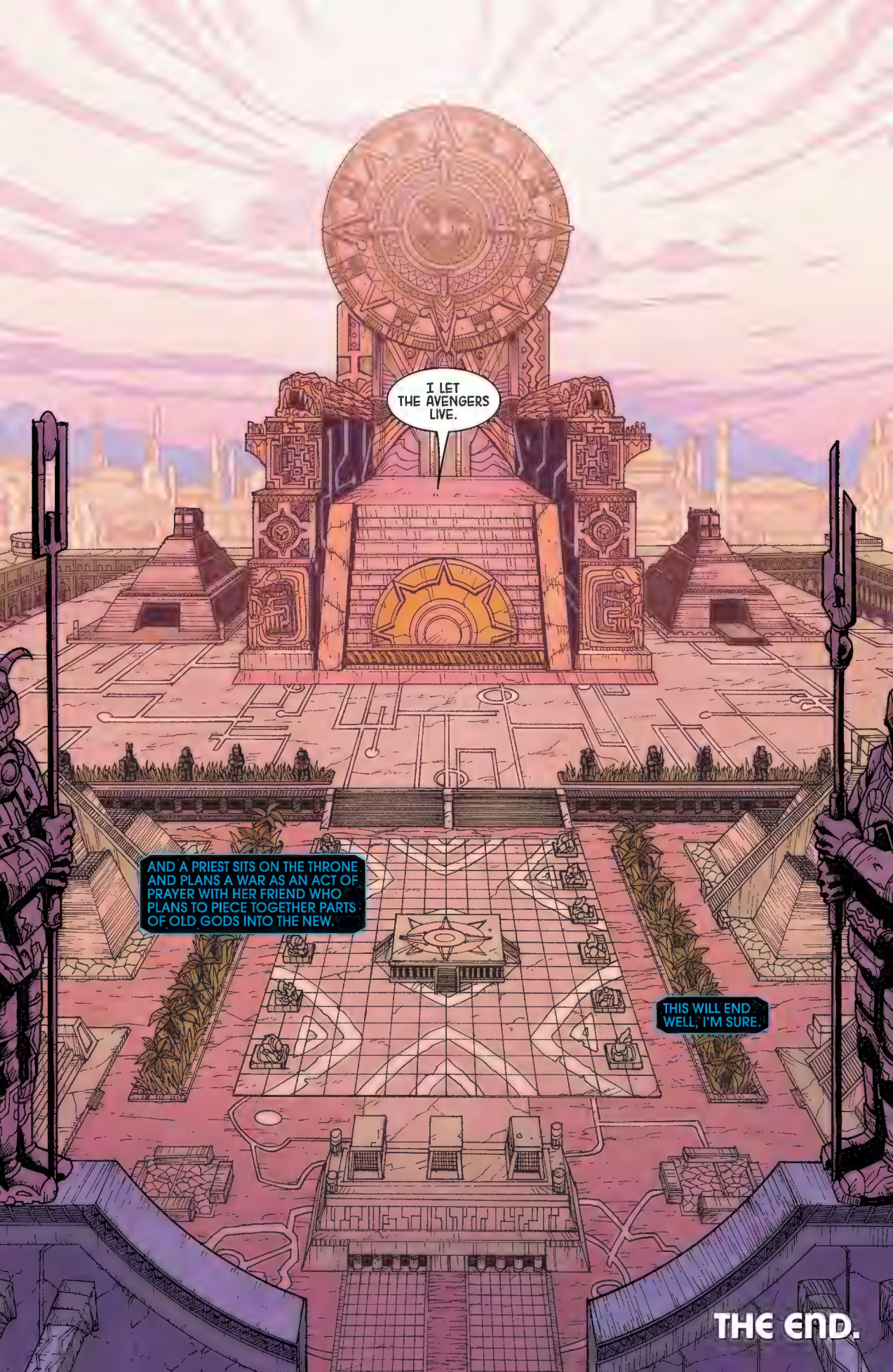
100 MILES AWAY:
THEY EACH DIVIDE THEIR CONSCIOUSNESSES. ONE TO DEBATE, THE OTHER TO CONCENTRATE ON THE INEVITABLE CONFLICT.


WITH ONE PART, MAKKARI TAKES A RISK AND LETS AJAK ACCESS THE OUTER LAYERS OF HER CONSCIOUSNESS TO READ HER THOUGHTS, SO SHE CAN TRY TO CONVINCE AJAK OF HER FOLLY...
THE OTHER PART JUST RUNS...


...MEANWHILE, THE FIRST PART OF AJAK RAGES AT MAKKARI WHILE THE SECOND ACTIVATES A SUBSPACE TRAP.
THIS IS A FIGHT AJAK HAS SEEN COMING FOR A LONG TIME.

IN A LIMITED BUBBLE REALITY, MAKKARI HAS LITERALLY NOWHERE TO RUN—AND AJAK MAKES THE "NOWHERE" SMALLER AND SMALLER, FORCING MAKKARI WITHIN THE RANGE OF HER BLOWS.
MAKKARI KNOWS SHE HAS TO WIN QUICKLY. SHE ATTACKS WITH MICRO STRIKES, ABRADING AJAK'S EPIDERMIS.
AS QUICK AS MAKKARI IS, THE PART OF HER BRAIN THAT FIGHTS KNOWS SHE HASN'T ENOUGH TIME. SHE HAS LOST THE FIGHT.
BUT THE FIGHT IS ONLY HALF THE BATTLE.
YOU CAN'T JUST ATTACK THE AVENGERS! YOU'LL JUST LOSE! YOU'RE THROWING YOURSELF AWAY!
THEY DEFILE GOD AND *BOAST* OF THEIR CONGRESS WITH THE MINDS OF THE CELESTIAL INFINITE!
HOW CAN YOU THINK THAT INSULT CAN BE BORNE?!
I SAW MY GOD DESECRATED. NOW YOU SEE YOURS. WHAT YOU SAW NOW IS WHAT I SAW THEN.
YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS HOW I FELT...
...AND I AM THE ONLY ONE WHO UNDERSTANDS YOU. AND I'M TELLING YOU THIS...
IT CAN BE BORNE. IT *HAS* TO BE BORNE. WE ARE PRIESTS. IT IS OUR JOB TO BEAR IT.
AND WITH AJAK'S HAND AROUND THE THROAT OF HER HERETIC FRIEND...

...SHE FEELS LESS ALONE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A LONG TIME.
SO... NOW WILL YOU JOIN ME?
THIS THRONE WOULD BE BETTER IF WE CRAFTED A GOD TO SIT ON IT...
NO. WE ALREADY HAVE OUR GODS. I UNDERSTAND NOW. THIS IS A TEST.
OUR GODS ARE ANGRY WITH US.
WE HAVE FAILED THE OLD COVENANT AND MUST LIVE UP TO IT.
SO THE PILGRIMAGE TAUGHT YOU NOTHING?
NO, MAKKARI. IT TAUGHT ME MUCH. IF THE GODS ARE ANGRY WITH US, I NOW KNOW WHY.
THE BLASPHEMOUS MAGGOT AVENGERS BURROWING THROUGH THE CORPSES OF THE DIVINE, FOR A START.
THE GODS GAVE THEM PERMISSION.
NO, THAT'S WHAT PROVES IT'S A TEST.
THE CELESTIALS DO NOT SPEAK CLEARLY.
THE CELESTIALS' WORDS ARE A MAZE. THEY CONCEAL MEANING. THEY REQUIRE INTERPRETATION.
THAT THEY SAID SOMETHING SO SIMPLE TO THE DEMON PROVES IT CANNOT BE WHAT THEY ACTUALLY MEAN.
AND IN TRUTH? NOW I KNOW SOMETHING ELSE.
A MILLION YEARS AGO, I MADE A MISTAKE.


I LET THE AVENGERS LIVE.
AND A PRIEST SITS ON THE THRONE AND PLANS A WAR AS AN ACT OF PRAYER WITH HER FRIEND WHO PLANS TO PIECE TOGETHER PARTS OF OLD GODS INTO THE NEW.
THIS WILL END WELL, I'M SURE.
THE END.

THE HERETIC

ETERNALS

THE HERETIC

The Prime Eternal is a title bestowed upon the elected leader of the Eternals' society. As Prime Eternal, one has the authority to deploy the forces of the Machine for whatever ends they desire. In essence, being Prime Eternal is like being the absolute ruler of Earth.

And who is the bearer of this all-powerful title today?

Thanos, the Mad Titan.

Oh dear.

THANOS' GRANDFATHER

THE EXCLUSION.
THE RULE OF THANOS IS WELL UNDERWAY.
THERE'S STILL TEETHING PROBLEMS, SOME FORTHRIGHT DISCUSSIONS OF POLITICAL DIFFERENCES...
FOR EXAMPLE, VALKIN OF POLARIA STRONGLY BELIEVES THAT HE SHOULDN'T BE DRAGGED DOWN A CORRIDOR AND THROWN INTO A CELL.
THANOS FEELS OTHERWISE.
KRNCH

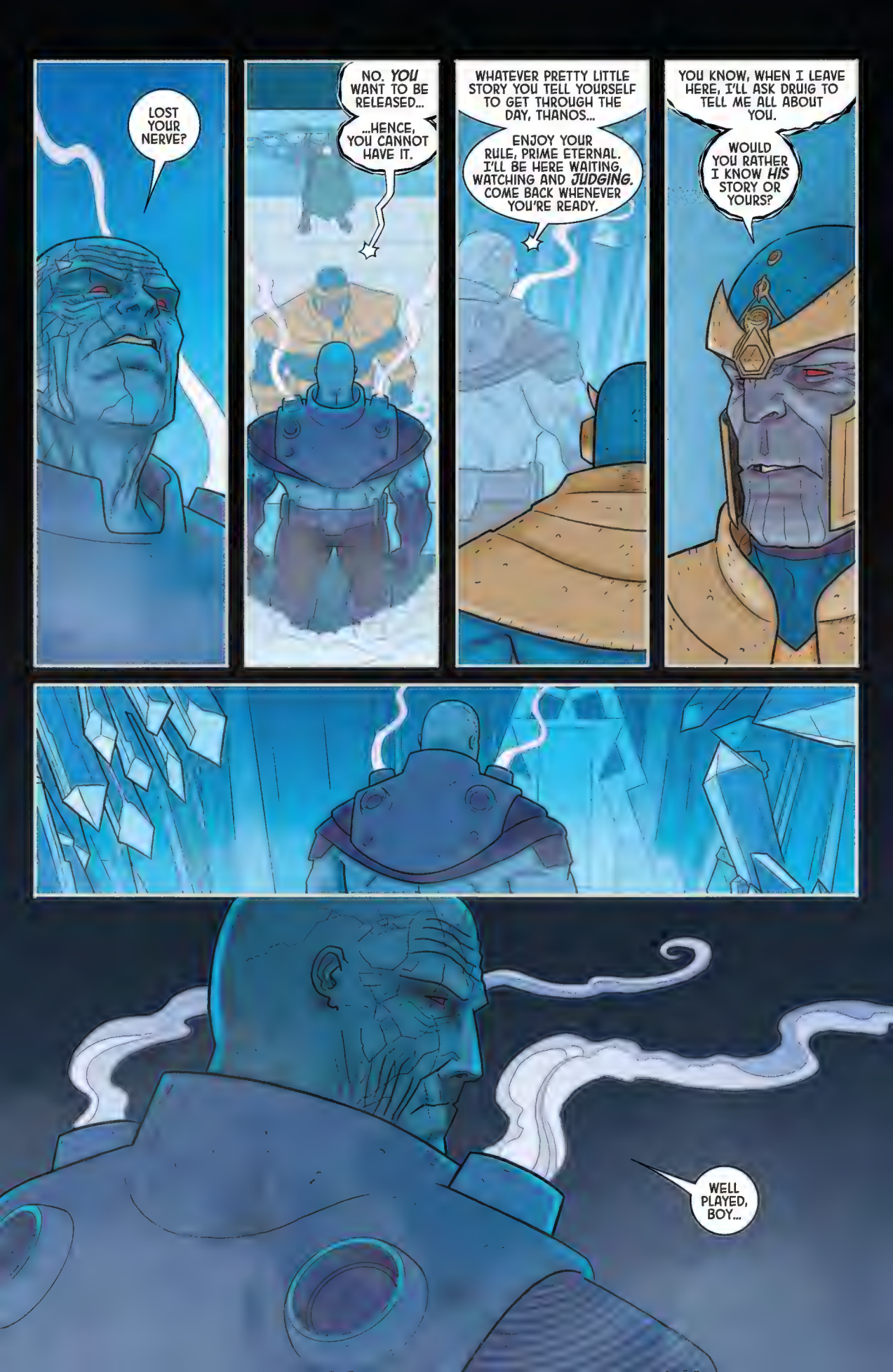
I'M SORRY YOU'RE A LITTLE RETICENT TO JOIN THE NEW ORDER, FATHER.
HOPEFULLY, YOUR EXCLUSION WILL BE BRIEF.
OR, AT LEAST, BRIEF FOR AN ETERNAL...
ONCE MORE, YOU ARE A DISAPPOINTMENT, DRUIG. ONCE MORE.
I WOULD RATHER THE CELESTIALS HAD CARVED ME A STATUE IN DUNG THAN GIVEN YOU TO ME.
SOMEONE HAS TO BE BRAVE ENOUGH TO COLLABORATE.
SOME OF US HAVE TO BE SELFLESS ENOUGH TO PUT THINGS ABOVE THEIR OWN DIGNITY OR ETHICS.
I WONDER. WHAT DO YOU PUT ABOVE YOUR DIGNITY OR ETHICS?
WELL, MY OWN SURVIVAL, MY LORD.
HMPH. YOU ARE A SNAKE.
I AM AS THE CELESTIALS LEFT ME.

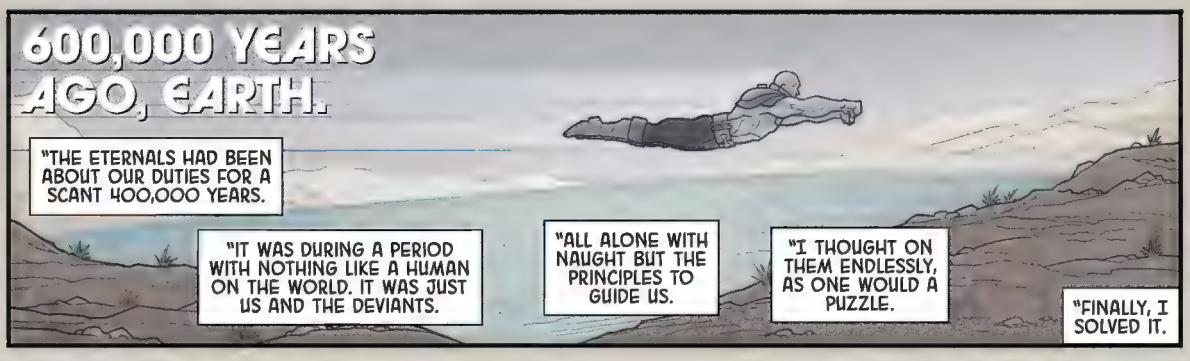
THERE WAS A PART OF ME THAT ALWAYS WONDERED WHAT THIS EARTH FAMILY OF MINE WAS LIKE. WERE THEY DIFFERENT TO THE ONE I KNEW ON TITAN?
MY FATHER AND MOTHER, WHO CAST ME INTO THE HELL OF LIFE. BROTHER EROS, MERE DOGGEREL TO MY EPIC VERSE.
GRANDFATHER KRONOS, URGING OTHERS TO STOP ME. HE GAINED SUCH POWER FOR NOTHING. A TIMELORD WHO KNEW IT WAS ALWAYS TOO LATE...
INSTEAD, I FIND WEAKLINGS.
THIS IS A TREE THAT WOULD BE BETTER PLUCKED OF ALL FRUIT AND LEFT AS A BARREN WARNING.
HMM. YOU REMIND ME OF MY GRANDFATHER-- YOUR GRAND-UNCLE.
HE WAS DISAPPOINTED WITH HIS FAMILY TOO.
UH-OH.
WANT TO MEET HIM?
NOPENOPENOPE
THIS BEING IS... URANOS.
KILLED AND CAPTURED AFTER HIS... HERESY, YES?
OH, NO. NEVER KILLED, BUT CERTAINLY CAPTURED.
HE'S STILL IMPRISONED HERE...
...THEY COULDN'T RISK KILLING HIM AFTER WE LOST.
PLEASE, NO.
DON'T GO DOWN THERE.

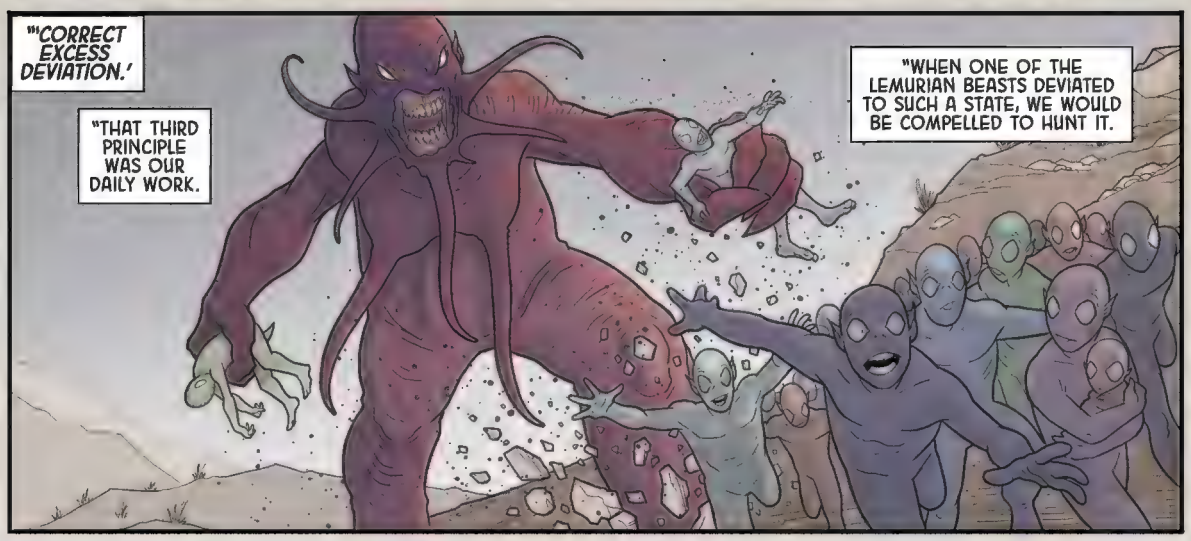
GRRR.
YOU'RE CURIOUS, AREN'T YOU?
CURIOSITY IS NO SIN, MY LORD.
YOU SPEAK TO THANOS AS IF HE CARES ABOUT ANYTHING AS SMALL AS "SIN"?
SHOW ME.
YEAH, I'M OUT. SORRY.
YOU CAN PROVIDE YOUR OWN NARRATION AND IRONIC COMMENTARY.
THIS GUY SCARES THE %$#@ OUT OF ME.
AH, THANOS. AT LAST.
I HOPED TO MEET YOU, TO LOOK *ANOTHER* DISAPPOINTMENT IN THE EYE...

YOU KILLED *HALF* THE UNIVERSE, BOY.
FIFTY PERCENT? WHAT A LACK OF COMMITMENT.
DO SOMETHING OR *DON'T* DO IT.

I'VE KILLED MORE THAN THAT. I WOULD BE MORE THAN HAPPY TO ADD YOU TO MY TALLY.
SADLY, THERE'S NO WORD FOR KILLING YOUR GRAND-UNCLE.
PERHAPS WE CAN COIN ONE?
WHY NOT? YOU'RE THE *PRIME ETERNAL.*
LET ME OUT.
SIRE. I WOULD NOT--
SILENCE.
NO, YOU STAY RIGHT HERE.

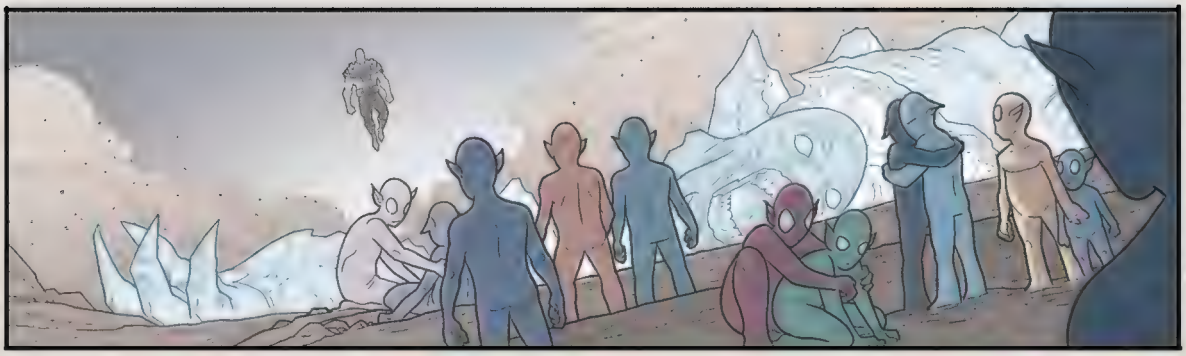

LOST YOUR NERVE?
NO. YOU WANT TO BE RELEASED...
...HENCE, YOU CANNOT HAVE IT.
WHATEVER PRETTY LITTLE STORY YOU TELL YOURSELF TO GET THROUGH THE DAY, THANOS...
ENJOY YOUR RULE, PRIME ETERNAL. I'LL BE HERE WAITING, WATCHING AND JUDGING. COME BACK WHENEVER YOU'RE READY.
YOU KNOW, WHEN I LEAVE HERE, I'LL ASK DRUIG TO TELL ME ALL ABOUT YOU.
WOULD YOU RATHER I KNOW HIS STORY OR YOURS?
WELL PLAYED, BOY...

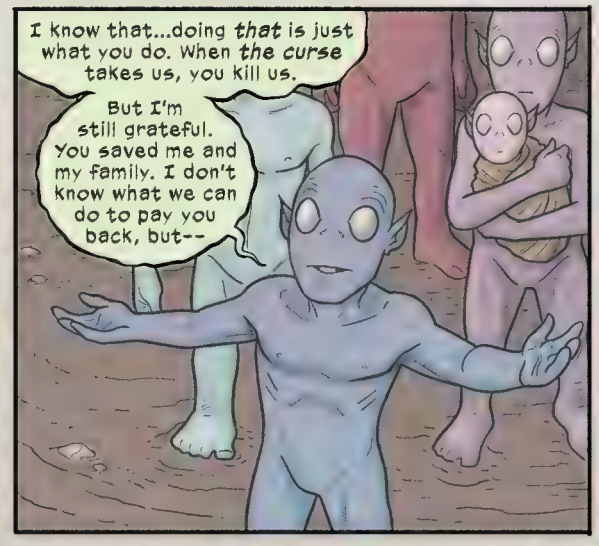

600,000 YEARS AGO, EARTH.
"THE ETERNALS HAD BEEN ABOUT OUR DUTIES FOR A SCANT 400,000 YEARS.
"IT WAS DURING A PERIOD WITH NOTHING LIKE A HUMAN ON THE WORLD. IT WAS JUST US AND THE DEVIANTS.
"ALL ALONE WITH NAUGHT BUT THE PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE US.
"I THOUGHT ON THEM ENDLESSLY, AS ONE WOULD A PUZZLE.
"FINALLY, I SOLVED IT.

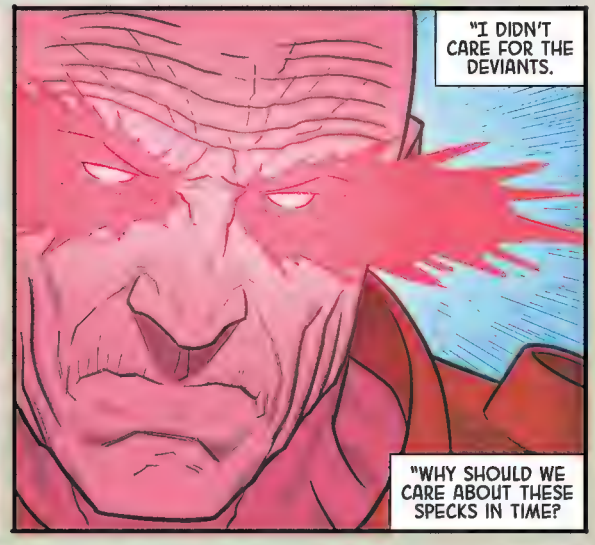

"'CORRECT EXCESS DEVIATION.'
"THAT THIRD PRINCIPLE WAS OUR DAILY WORK.
"WHEN ONE OF THE LEMURIAN BEASTS DEVIATED TO SUCH A STATE, WE WOULD BE COMPELLED TO HUNT IT.

"I AM THE KEEPER OF THE SECRET ARSENALS OF THE MACHINE. WITH A GESTURE, I CAN SUMMON WAR ITSELF TO ME AND UNLEASH A GREAT TIDE OF COSMIC FIRE.
"YET EVEN URANOS THE UNDYING, WITH ALL MY MAJESTY, COULDN'T RESIST THE PRINCIPLES.
EXCESS DEVIATION.

"THERE WAS NO END TO IT.




I know that...doing *that* is just what you do. When *the curse* takes us, you kill us.
But I'm still grateful. You saved me and my family. I don't know what we can do to pay you back, but--


"I DIDN'T CARE FOR THE DEVIANTS.
"WHY SHOULD WE CARE ABOUT THESE SPECKS IN TIME?

"WHY CARE ABOUT *DUST?*
"WHY SHOULD BEINGS AS GRAND AS WE BE CHAINED FOREVER TO *SWEEPING UP* DUST?
"MY SOLUTION WOULD *FREE US.*"

I UNDERSTAND YOU WANT TO BE MADE PART OF THE MACHINE, BOY.
I WOULD BE CAREFUL TO NOT TAKE THE *RESPONSIBILITIES*, AS WELL AS THE *RIGHTS*.
THE RESPONSIBILITIES ARE *TEDIOUS*.
THAT SAID...YOU'VE BEEN A CREATURE OF DUTY MANY TIMES, I UNDERSTAND.
THAT STRANGE SCHOOLBOY CRUSH ON YOUR COSMIC BETTERS...
TO LOVE *DEATH* WITH ALL MY ARTFUL HEART IS NOT A DUTY.
IT IS A PRIVILEGE TO HAVE SUCH A MUSE.
HMPH. THE PRINCIPLES ARE NOT NEARLY SO PRETTY. THERE IS NO ROMANCE IN AN ETERNITY OF CLEARING SLUDGE FROM THE DRAINS OF THE MACHINE.
HOWEVER, WHILE THE CELESTIALS HAD LEFT US A PROBLEM, I KNEW WHAT TO DO...
...I HAD A SOLUTION MOST ABSOLUTE AND FINAL...
BUT TO PUT IT INTO ACTION?
THESE WERE THE DAYS BEFORE THERE WAS A PRIME ETERNAL.
I DIDN'T NEED TO DEAL WITH POLITICS AND LITTLE BEINGS LIKE DRUIG TO WIN A THRONE TO PUT THINGS INTO ACTION.
THIS WAS THE TIME OF THE *THREE PATRIARCHS*.
I WOULD BRING THIS TO MY BROTHERS. THEY WERE MEN OF SCIENCE AND CLEAR THOUGHT.
I WOULD GIVE THEM A CHANCE TO SEE REASON...

THE AGE OF THE PATRIARCHS

While no true Eternals are born, the one hundred Eternals are divided into three kinds of family structures.

3-GEN: Parents and children, who in turn have children. ("The Dynasties.")

2-GEN: Parents and children. ("The Atomic Families.")

1-GEN: Singular Eternals with no families. ("The Singularities.")

There are only three dynasties.

THE URANOS DYNASTY **THE OCEANUS DYNASTY** **THE KRONOS DYNASTY**

The Dynasties are linked by the founders having a second familial identity: Uranos, Oceanus and Kronos were siblings. They are known as the Three Patriarchs.

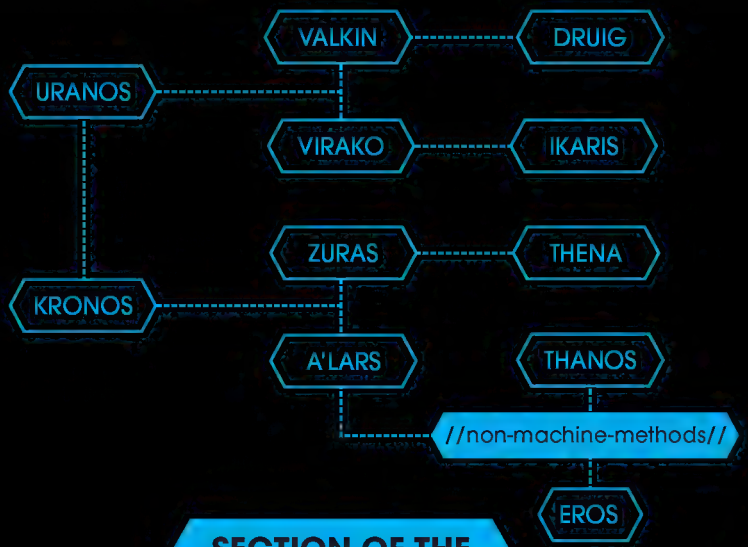
While all Eternals have the same core abilities, those who sit at the top of a Dynasty are especially powerful, across several axes.

Their most relevant ability is that when entering the Uni-Mind, they control the votes of their whole lines.

The Age of the Patriarchs was defined by the Three Patriarchs being able to dominate the Uni-Mind and so act as a ruling Triad.

For details on the Matriarchs' influence in this period and the Eternal concept of gender in dynasties, see (ERROR: SECTION DELETED).

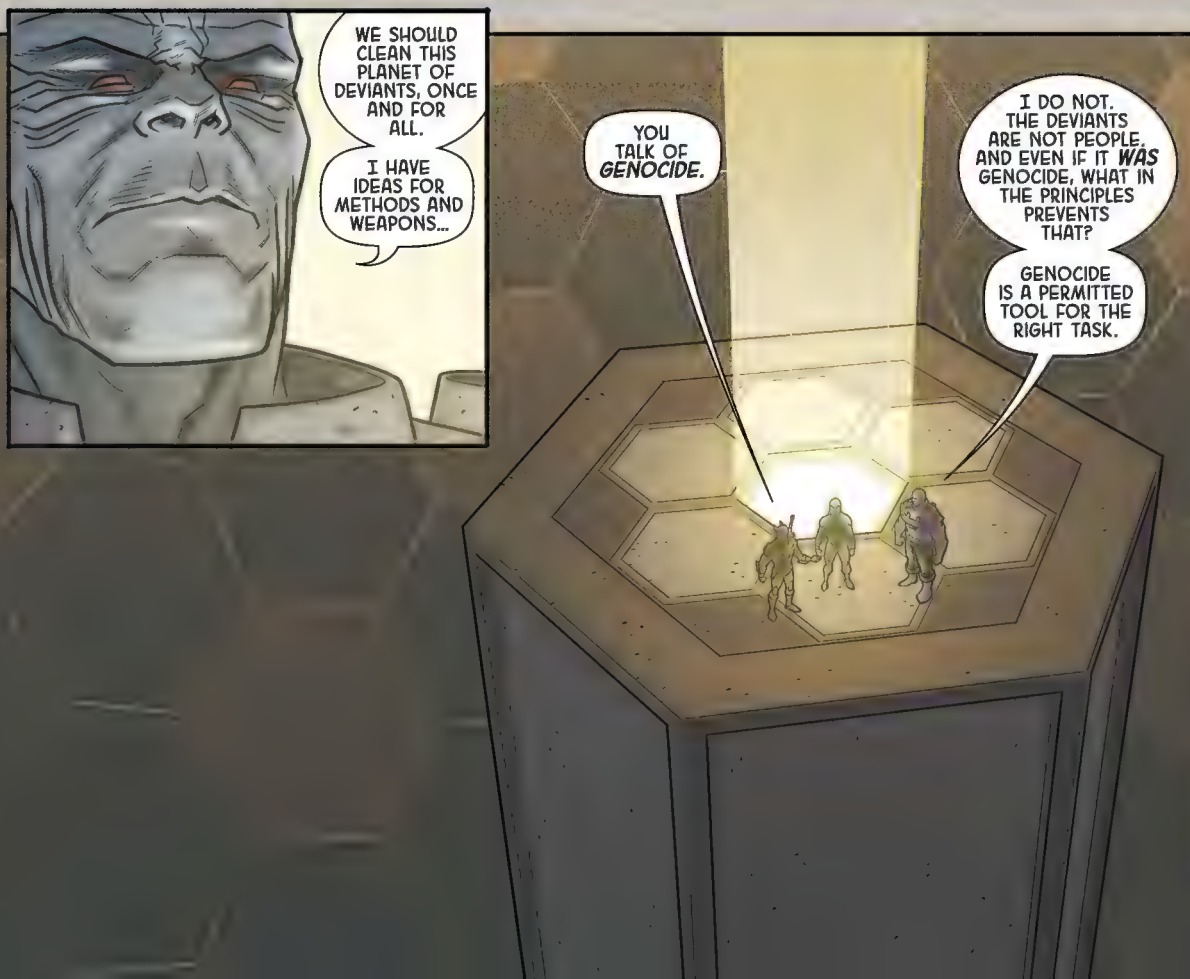
SECTION OF THE URANOS DYNASTY



SECTION OF THE KRONOS DYNASTY

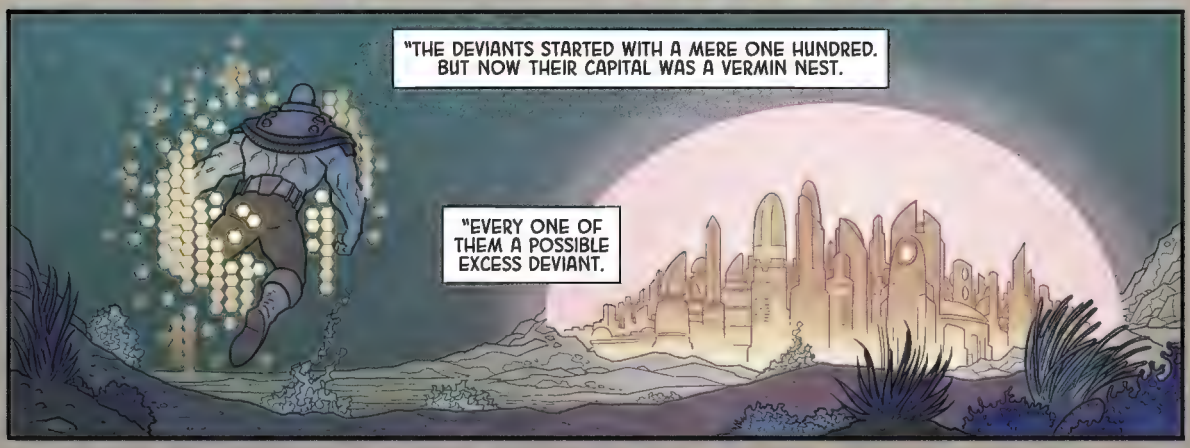
WELL, BROTHERS. I HAVE COME TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE PRINCIPLES AND HAVE A NEW COURSE TO SET.
IT WOULD LEAVE US AS FREE MASTERS OF OUR DESTINY AND BETTER SERVANTS OF THE CELESTIALS...
THE PATRIARCHIAL CORE, TITANOS.

YOU PROMISE MUCH, BROTHER. I TOO HAVE BEEN CHEWING OVER POSSIBILITIES, AS YOU KNOW. SHARE YOURS.
I CONCUR WITH KRONOS. SPEAK, AND I HOPE YOU DO NOT OVERREACH...
WELL, OCEANUS, THE THIRD PRINCIPLE STATES WE ARE TO CORRECT EXCESS DEVIATION. I WOULD ARGUE *ANY* DEVIATION IS EXCESS DEVIATION.
THERE IS ONE SIMPLE WAY TO PREVENT THAT.


WE SHOULD CLEAN THIS PLANET OF DEVIANTS, ONCE AND FOR ALL.
I HAVE IDEAS FOR METHODS AND WEAPONS...
YOU TALK OF *GENOCIDE.*
I DO NOT. THE DEVIANTS ARE NOT PEOPLE. AND EVEN IF IT *WAS* GENOCIDE, WHAT IN THE PRINCIPLES PREVENTS THAT?
GENOCIDE IS A PERMITTED TOOL FOR THE RIGHT TASK.

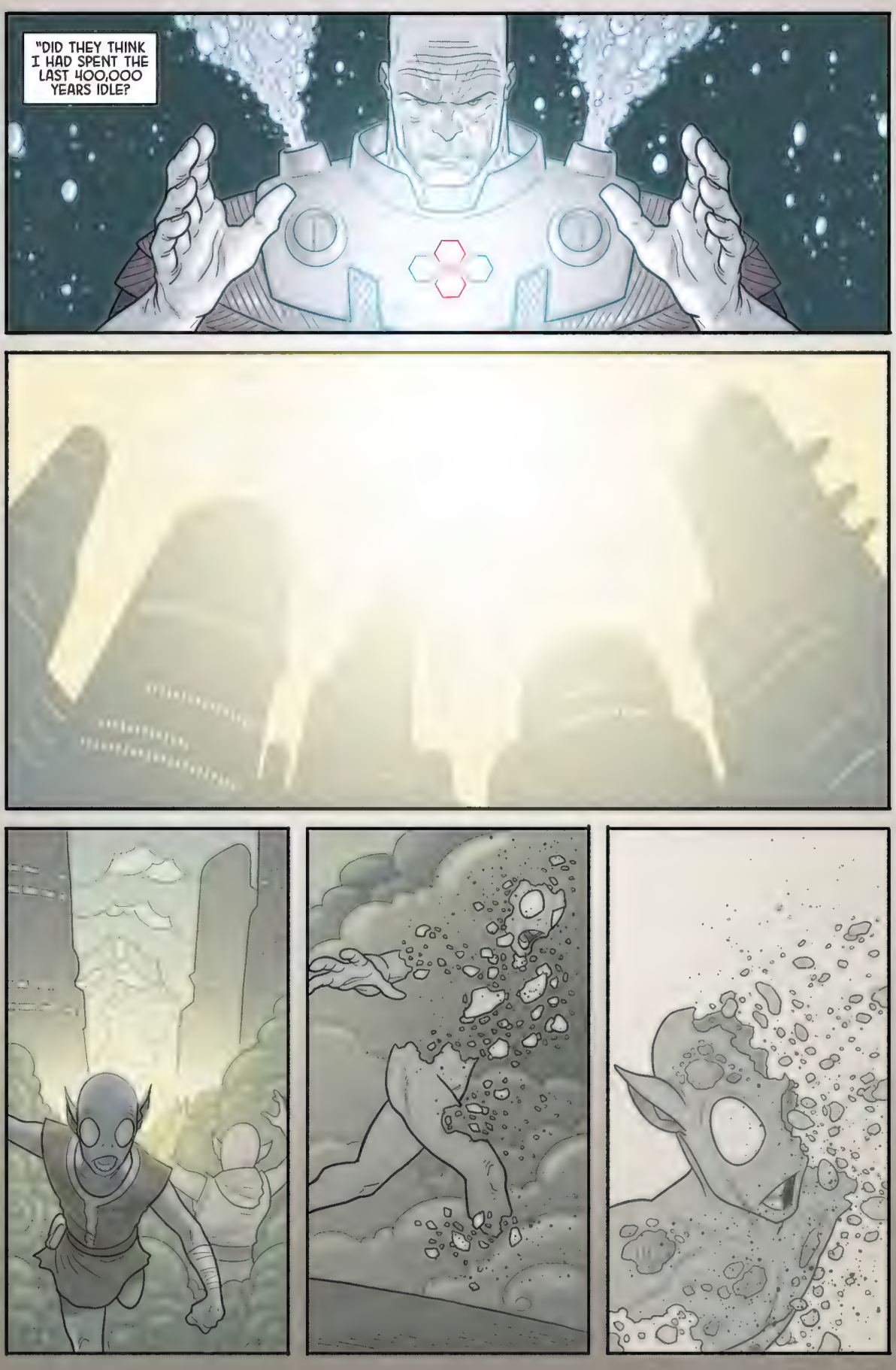
NO. THIS IS IMMORAL... WHAT MAD WEAPON ARE YOU CONSIDERING? NEVER.
QUITE... AND THERE'S NO WAY BACK.
PERHAPS THE CELESTIALS' PLAN *NEEDS* THE DEVIANTS?
IF IT DID, THEY WOULD HAVE CODED US TO PREVENT US FROM DOING THIS.

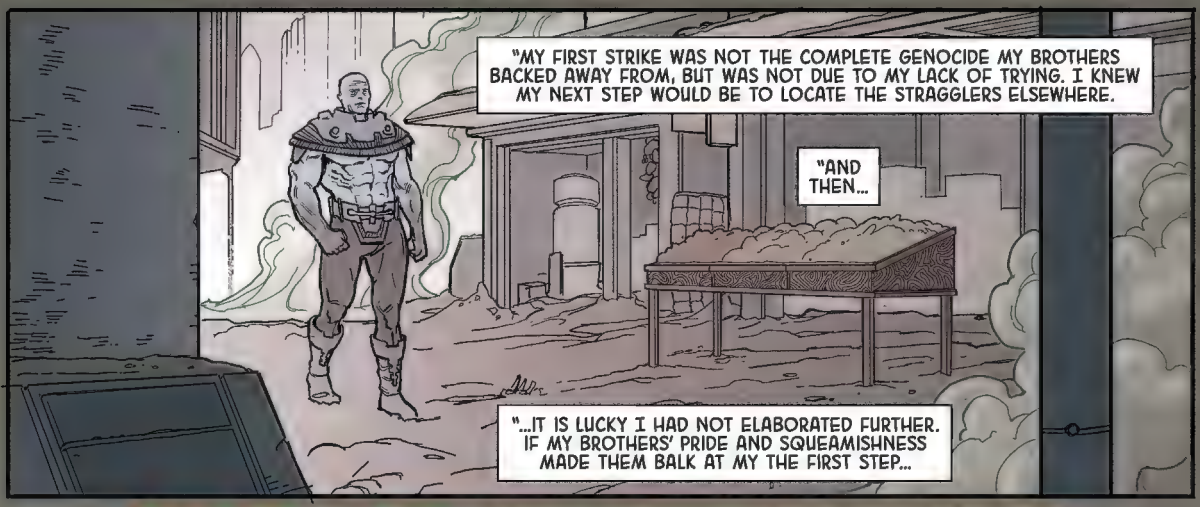
BUT I UNDERSTAND YOUR DECISION. YOU DISAGREE. I AM DISAPPOINTED, BUT NOT SURPRISED.
THANKS FOR LISTENING, MY BROTHERS.

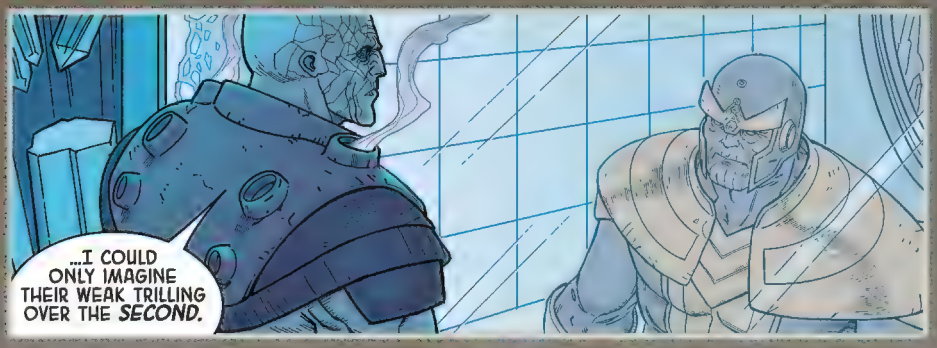

"THE DEVIANTS STARTED WITH A MERE ONE HUNDRED. BUT NOW THEIR CAPITAL WAS A VERMIN NEST.
"EVERY ONE OF THEM A POSSIBLE EXCESS DEVIANT.

"ANY ONE OF THEM A DISTRACTION FOR US.
"I COULD NOT UNDERSTAND HOW MY BROTHERS REJECTED MY CLARITY.

"I SHOULD NOT MAKE THESE WEAPONS?
"THE SWEET FOOLS.


"DID THEY THINK I HAD SPENT THE LAST 400,000 YEARS IDLE?


"MY FIRST STRIKE WAS NOT THE COMPLETE GENOCIDE MY BROTHERS BACKED AWAY FROM, BUT WAS NOT DUE TO MY LACK OF TRYING. I KNEW MY NEXT STEP WOULD BE TO LOCATE THE STRAGGLERS ELSEWHERE.
"AND THEN...
"...IT IS LUCKY I HAD NOT ELABORATED FURTHER. IF MY BROTHERS' PRIDE AND SQUEAMISHNESS MADE THEM BALK AT MY THE FIRST STEP...


...I COULD ONLY IMAGINE THEIR WEAK TRILLING OVER THE SECOND.

URANOS TO ALL URANITES.
MY BROTHERS ARE COMMITTED TO THE STATUS QUO. BUT WE MUST SET OUR PEOPLE FREE.

PUBLISH THE DECREE.
WE MARCH TO OMNI-GENOCIDE.

URANOS' THESES ON THE PRINCIPLES

The Principles are what guide the Eternals. They are who we are. We have been cowards and hiding from their true implications.

CORRECT EXCESS DEVIATION:

Any deviation is excess deviation.

The only way to guarantee there is no excess deviation is to destroy all Deviants.

PROTECT THE MACHINE:

Eternals have defined the Machine broadly as the whole of this planet. This is simply not true. The Machine is the infrastructure of the planet and the Eternals, and nothing else.

The Deviant is not the Machine. The flower is not the Machine. The mammal is not the Machine. All can, and should, be purged.

Furthermore: All existence outside the Machine is a possible threat to the Machine. The Principles dictate that after securing this world, we should purge the galaxy. Anything else is a betrayal of the Principles.

PROTECT CELESTIALS:

Key word: Protect. Celestial freedom is unnecessary. While we cannot harm them, we should find techniques to pacify them. A god is too precious a thing to be free. A god should be safely in a cage.

IN CONCLUSION:

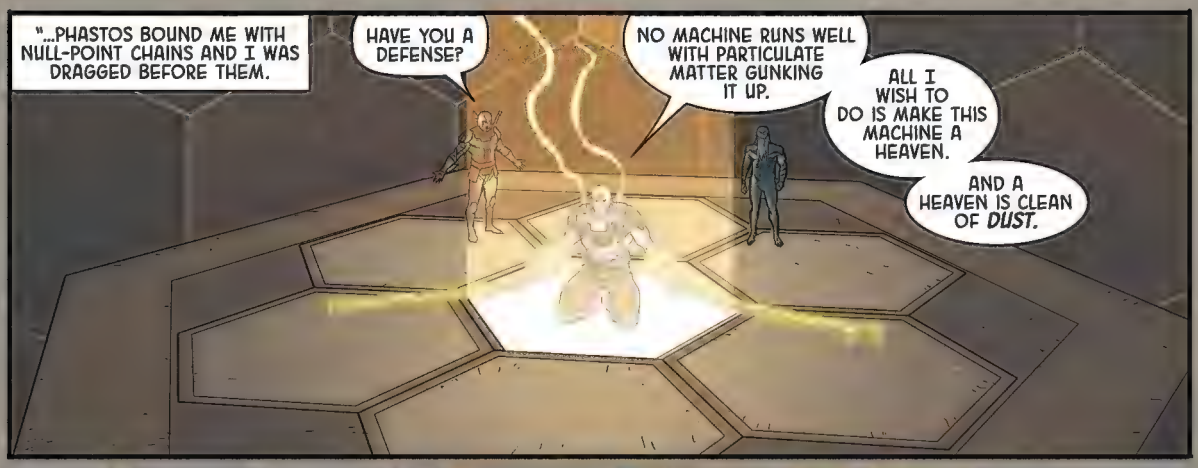
While we must protect this world, we can take this world wherever we wish. The Machine should be made mobile, capable of traversing the universe and plundering anything we require. We purge all that exists outside it and use it for parts to upgrade the Machine.

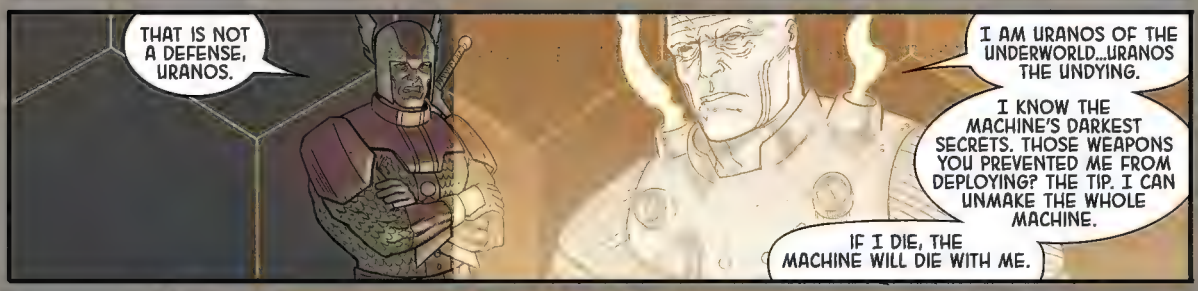
Fundamentally, there is a necessary conflict between the Principles and the existence of anything outside the Machine. We are at war.

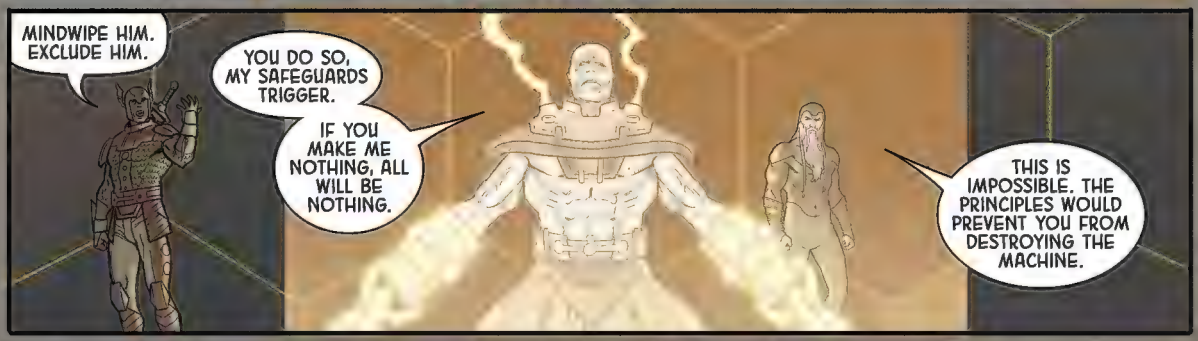
ETERNAL LIFE IS THE ONLY LIFE.

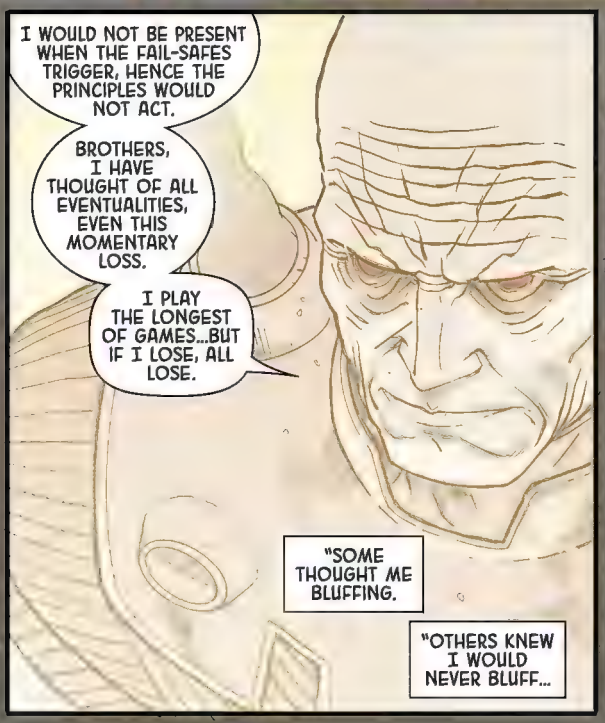
ALL OTHER "LIFE" IS THE HERESY.

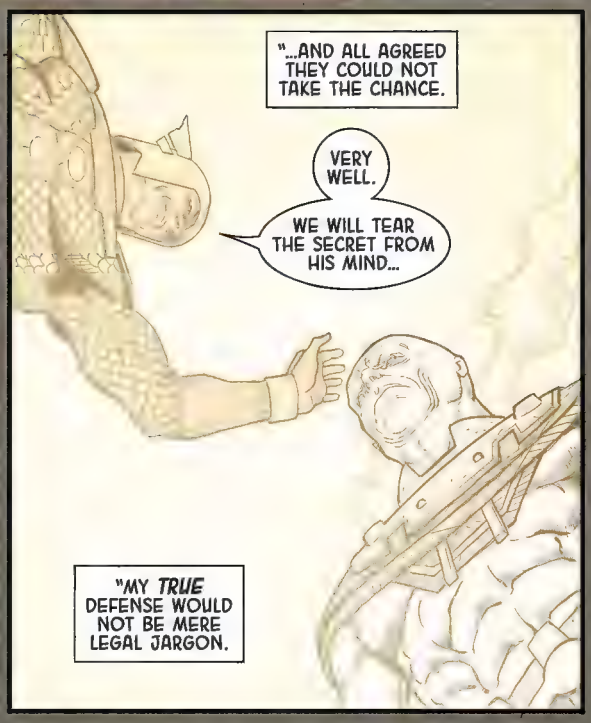
AND THEN, A WAR.
A WAR YOU LOST.
I WAS BETRAYED.
YOU WERE BETRAYED BECAUSE YOU HAD LOST.
I SAW THE WAY IT WAS GOING. AND LOOK WHAT IT DID! ALL THOSE URANITES, RUNNING OFF TO LIVE IN SOME HOLE IN SPACE, WITH SOME PATCHED-TOGETHER TERRIBLE CLONE OF YOU.
NOT THAT ANYONE WAS GRATEFUL...
WHY THE SMILE? YOUR HANDS ARE BLOODY WITH AWFUL DEEDS.
IF I DID NOT JOIN THE URANITES AND THEN BETRAY THEM, THE WORLD WOULD BE A BALL OF ROCK.
YOU ADMIRE IKARIS, BUT IKARIS MADE NO DIFFERENCE IN THE WAR. HE PUNCHED. HE BLUSTERED. HE ACTED LIKE A HERO.
I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU PREFER A HEROIC STYLE TO ACTUAL RESULTS, FATHER. SOME OF US BELIEVE IN CONTENT.
"AND THEN HE LOOKED AT ME, SNARLED AND SAID...
"...YOU BELIEVE IN NOTHING, DRUIG."
HE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND ME.
HE DOESN'T. AT THE LEAST, YOU BELIEVE IN YOUR SURVIVAL AND ALWAYS HAVE.
HENCE WHY YOU ARRANGED FOR ME TO BE TAKEN ALIVE. THEY DIDN'T KNOW WHY, OF COURSE...

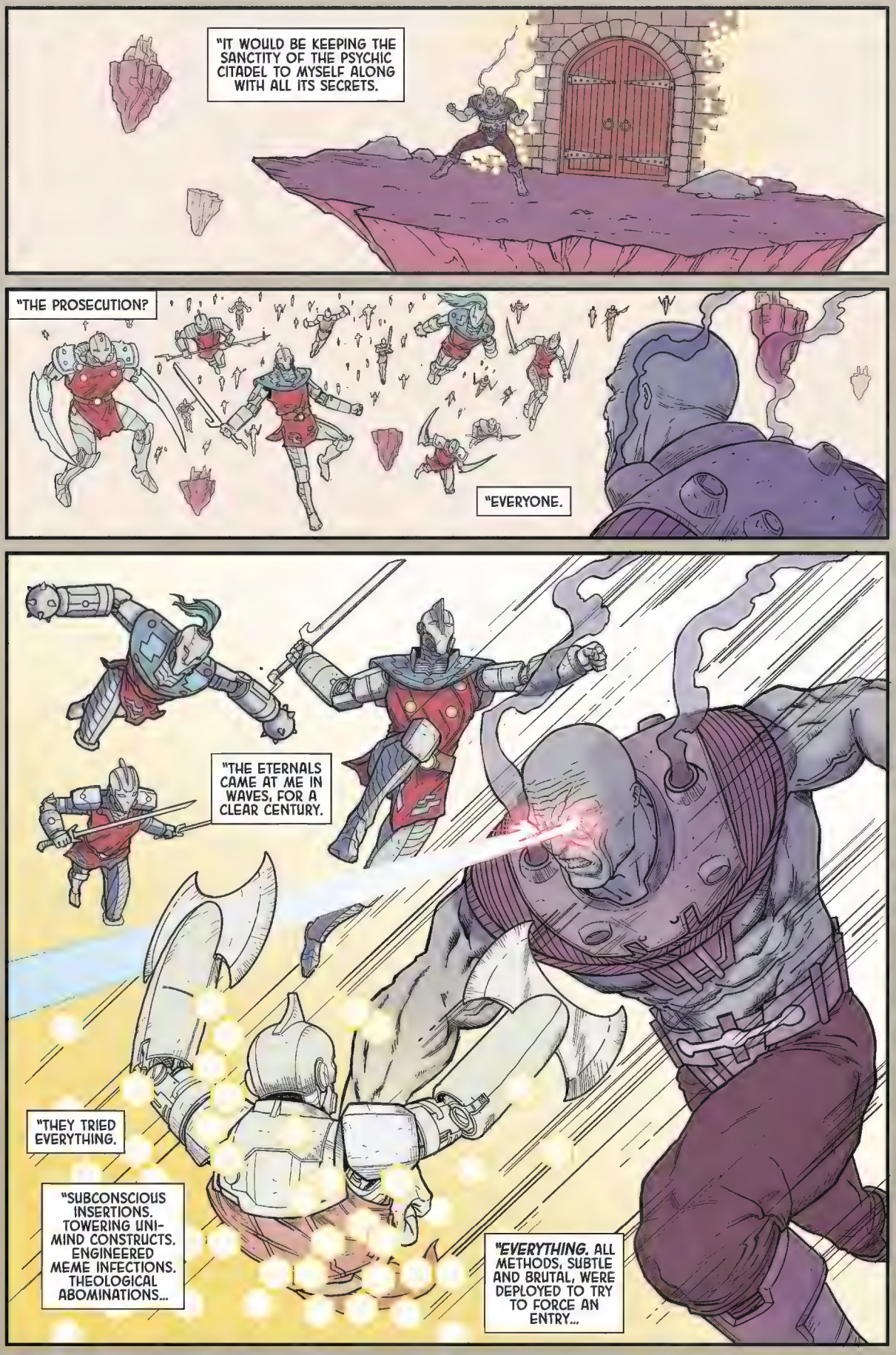

"...PHASTOS BOUND ME WITH NULL-POINT CHAINS AND I WAS DRAGGED BEFORE THEM.
HAVE YOU A DEFENSE?
NO MACHINE RUNS WELL WITH PARTICULATE MATTER GUNKING IT UP.
ALL I WISH TO DO IS MAKE THIS MACHINE A HEAVEN.
AND A HEAVEN IS CLEAN OF *DUST.*

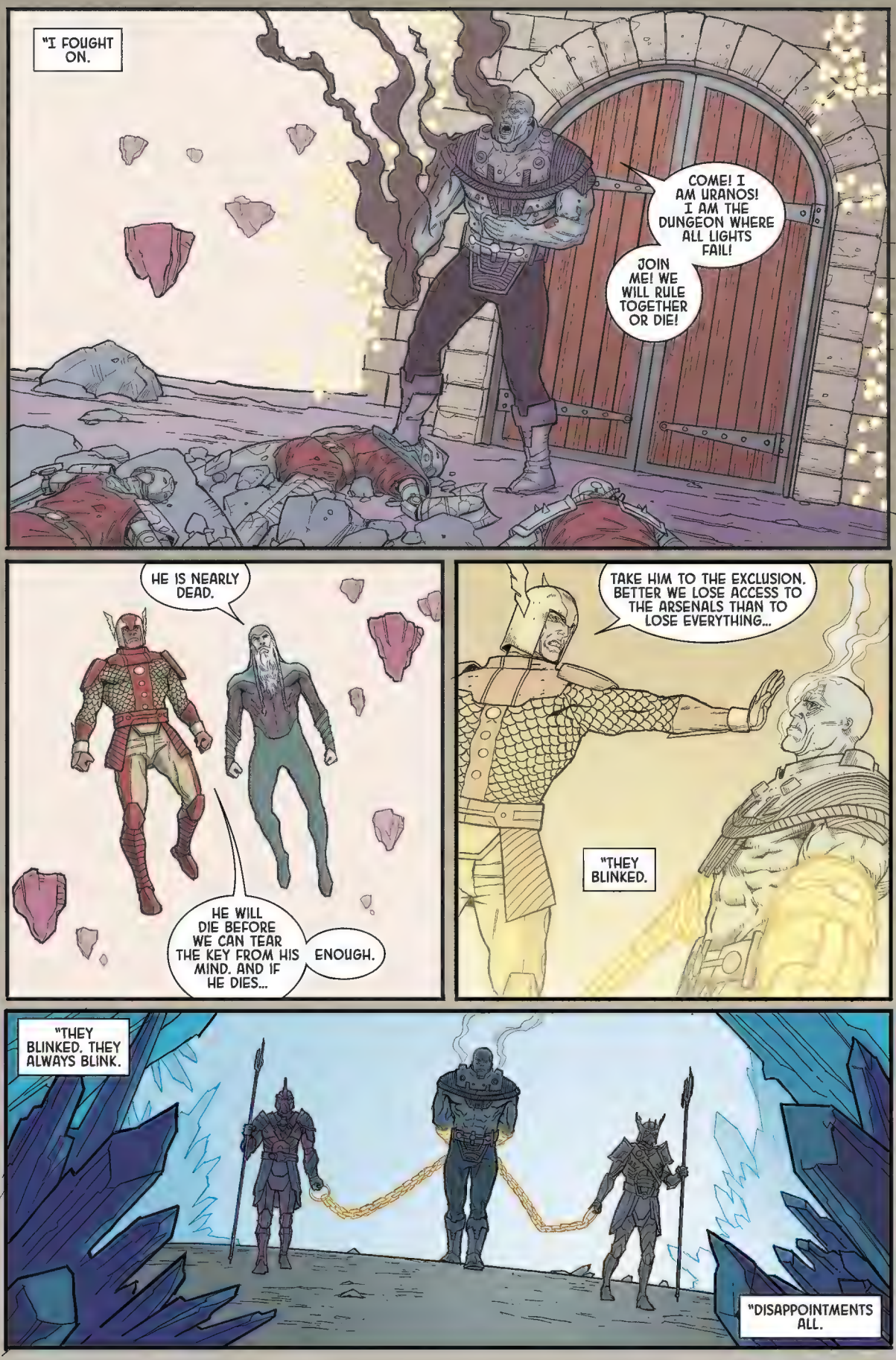

THAT IS NOT A DEFENSE, URANOS.
I AM URANOS OF THE UNDERWORLD...URANOS THE UNDYING.
I KNOW THE MACHINE'S DARKEST SECRETS. THOSE WEAPONS YOU PREVENTED ME FROM DEPLOYING? THE TIP. I CAN UNMAKE THE WHOLE MACHINE.
IF I DIE, THE MACHINE WILL DIE WITH ME.


MINDWIPE HIM. EXCLUDE HIM.
YOU DO SO, MY SAFEGUARDS TRIGGER.
IF YOU MAKE ME NOTHING, ALL WILL BE NOTHING.
THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE. THE PRINCIPLES WOULD PREVENT YOU FROM DESTROYING THE MACHINE.


I WOULD NOT BE PRESENT WHEN THE FAIL-SAFES TRIGGER, HENCE THE PRINCIPLES WOULD NOT ACT.
BROTHERS, I HAVE THOUGHT OF ALL EVENTUALITIES, EVEN THIS MOMENTARY LOSS.
I PLAY THE LONGEST OF GAMES...BUT IF I LOSE, ALL LOSE.
"SOME THOUGHT ME BLUFFING.
"OTHERS KNEW I WOULD NEVER BLUFF...


"...AND ALL AGREED THEY COULD NOT TAKE THE CHANCE.
VERY WELL.
WE WILL TEAR THE SECRET FROM HIS MIND...
"MY *TRUE* DEFENSE WOULD NOT BE MERE LEGAL JARGON.


"IT WOULD BE KEEPING THE SANCTITY OF THE PSYCHIC CITADEL TO MYSELF ALONG WITH ALL ITS SECRETS.
"THE PROSECUTION?
"EVERYONE.
"THE ETERNALS CAME AT ME IN WAVES, FOR A CLEAR CENTURY.
"THEY TRIED EVERYTHING.
"SUBCONSCIOUS INSERTIONS. TOWERING UNI-MIND CONSTRUCTS. ENGINEERED MEME INFECTIONS. THEOLOGICAL ABOMINATIONS...
"*EVERYTHING.* ALL METHODS, SUBTLE AND BRUTAL, WERE DEPLOYED TO TRY TO FORCE AN ENTRY...


"I FOUGHT ON.
COME! I AM URANOS! I AM THE DUNGEON WHERE ALL LIGHTS FAIL!
JOIN ME! WE WILL RULE TOGETHER OR DIE!
HE IS NEARLY DEAD.
HE WILL DIE BEFORE WE CAN TEAR THE KEY FROM HIS MIND. AND IF HE DIES...
ENOUGH.
TAKE HIM TO THE EXCLUSION. BETTER WE LOSE ACCESS TO THE ARSENALS THAN TO LOSE EVERYTHING...
"THEY BLINKED.
"THEY BLINKED. THEY ALWAYS BLINK.
"DISAPPOINTMENTS ALL.

AND SO, I SPENT 600,000 YEARS HERE.
YOU DO KNOW RECENTLY THOSE THESES OF YOURS WERE PROVEN WRONG.
THE CELESTIALS WANTED US TO PROTECT THE CREATURES OF EARTH TO MAKE ANTI-BODIES TO KILL SOME TERRIBLE CELESTIAL PLAGUE.
HMPH. THEY DID NOT CODE US SO. OUR GODS ARE INCOMPETENTS.
OUR GODS' DESIRES ARE OF NO RELEVANCE-- ONLY THE SCRIPTURE THEY SCOURED INTO US MATTER. THAT IS WHO WE ARE.
SO, PUTTING ASIDE PHILOSOPHY...
...IF I KILLED YOU, THE WORLD WOULD END?
YES.
"IF."
IT IS GOOD TO KNOW.
IT IS GOOD TO KNOW MANY THINGS.
GET RID OF THE LITTLE TRAITOR.
I HAVE A GIFT FOR YOU.
YOU HEARD. CRAWL AWAY, SNAKE.

THIS IS THE IMPRINT-KEY TO THE ARMORIES OF URANOS. IT WILL LET YOU ACCESS MY FAIL-SAFE.
IF YOU EVER HAVE THE NEED, THIS WILL DESTROY THE MACHINE.
YOU FOUGHT YOUR WHOLE PEOPLE TO KEEP IT.
YOU TRUST ME WITH YOUR GREAT SECRET?
I SEE A MEMBER OF MY LINE WHO IS NOT A DISAPPOINTMENT.
THE YOUNG SHOULD HAVE THEIR INHERITANCE TO ENJOY WHILE THEY CAN.
THANK YOU, GRANDUNCLE... ACTUALLY, NO.
I THINK NOT.
THANK YOU...
...GRANDFATHER.
THE END.

WHAT IF? #24

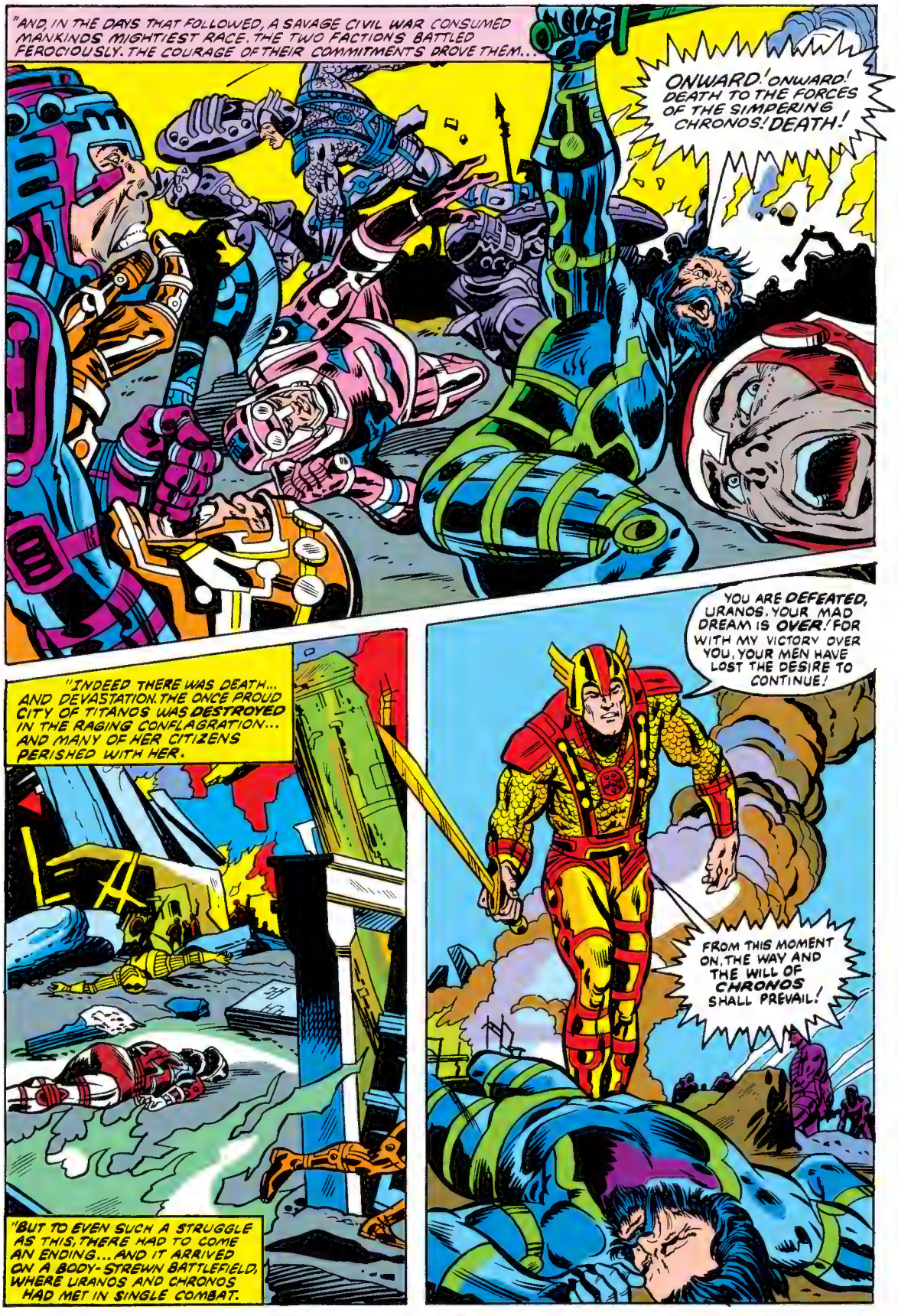
The Eternals have a complicated *and* contradictory history, which meant that one of my goals was trying to synthesize it all into one tapestry. "Turn continuity into mythology" was my line. As such, you had to look for ideas and connections, hints and interpretation. It literally can't all be true — it contradicts. What's a reading that could make sense? Equally, how would the Eternals see these stories? I don't think there's five pages I've mined more intensely than these. In Uranos and Kronos' fates, we see the Eternals' War in Heaven and Tower of Babel, respectively. They're that big to the Eternals, and I treated them as such. Plus, the moment when I realised Uranos was actually closely related to Thanos was a real penny-drop moment. Generational awfulness. Let's do this.

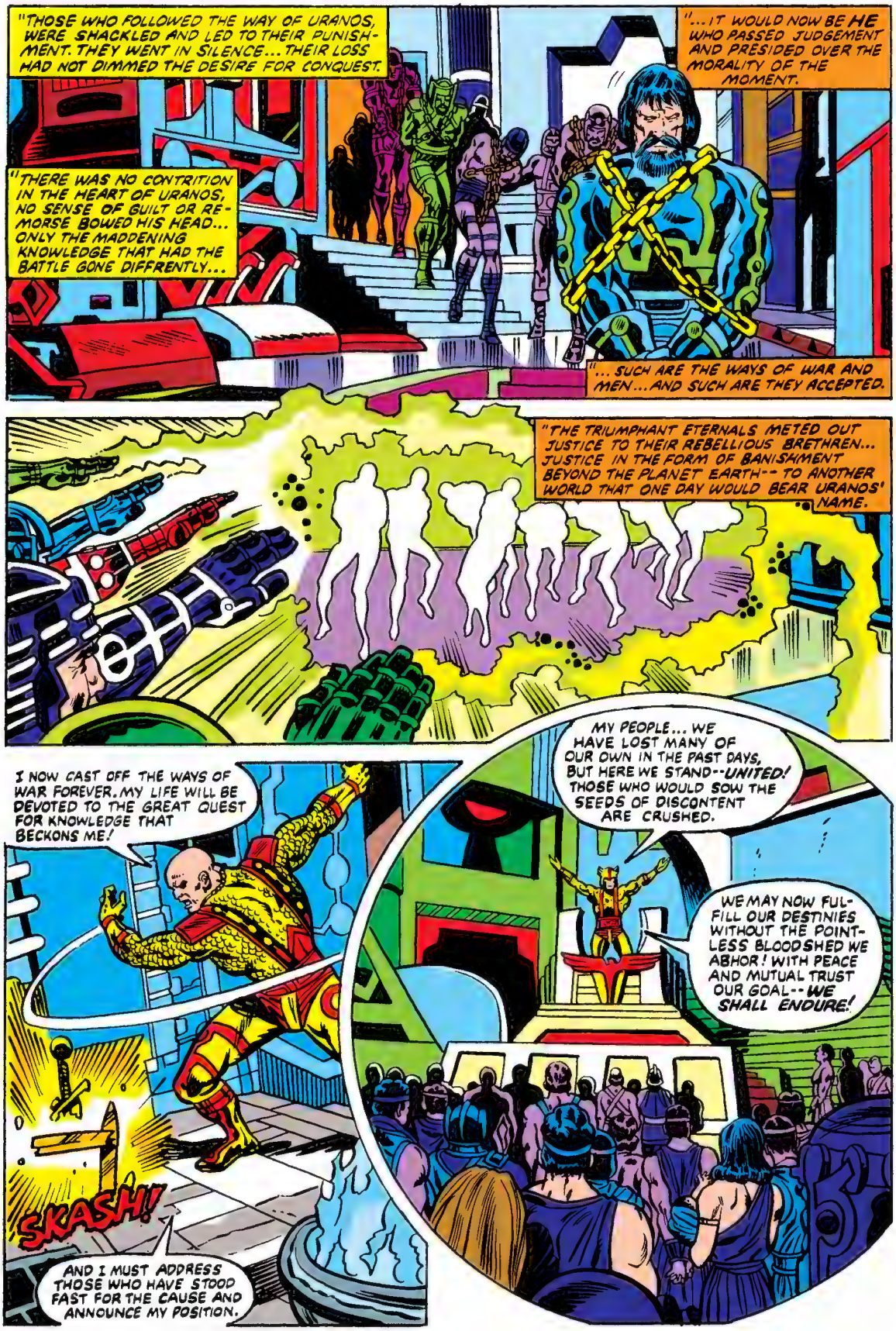
— Kieron Gillen

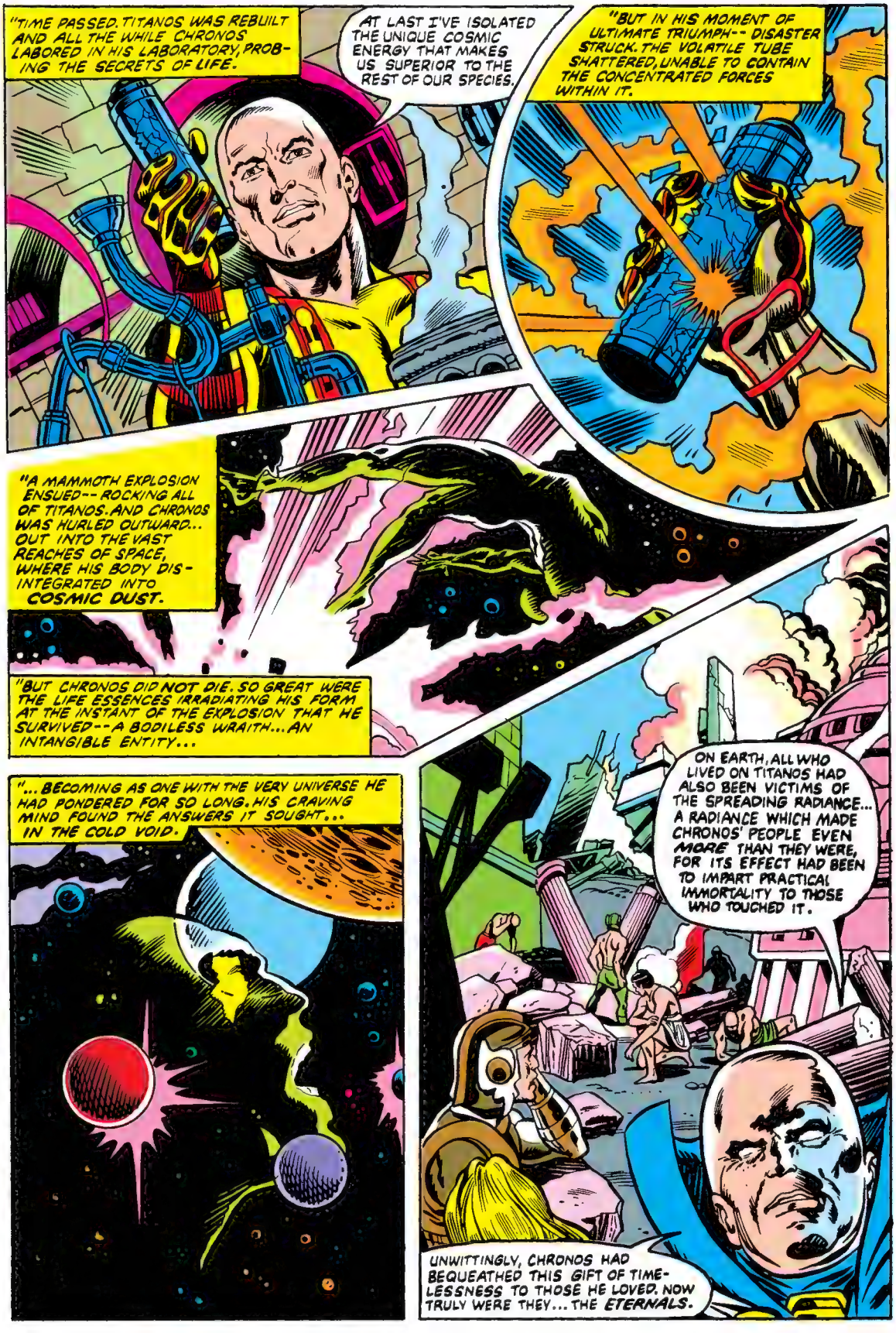
WRITER **RALPH MACCHIO** PENCILER **RICH BUCKLER**
INKER **CHIC STONE** COLORIST **ED HANNIGAN** LETTERER **JACK MORELLI**

Stan Lee PRESENTS:
UNTOLD TALES OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE!
I AM THE WATCHER, AND THOUGH I SOMETIMES RELATE EVENTS FROM REALITIES THAT DIVERGE FROM OUR OWN, MY PRIMARY TASK IS TO MONITOR THE EARTH OF OUR UNIVERSE. I HAVE OBSERVED THIS WORLD FROM ITS VERY INFANCY, AND I HAVE SEEN ITS WONDROUS HISTORY UNFOLD...
WITNESS THIS SCENE FROM REMOTEST PREHISTORY. THE BEINGS YOU SEE BEFORE YOU WERE, UNTIL SCANT YEARS AGO, MERE PRIMITIVE PRIMATES. THEN THE AWESOME ALIEN EXPERIMENTERS KNOWN AS THE CELESTIALS CAME TO EARTH AND TAMPERED WITH THEIR GENETIC CODES TO PRODUCE AN EVOLUTIONARY OFFSHOOT OF HUMANITY--WITH POWERS, LONGEVITY, AND PERSPECTIVES DENIED THE MAINSTREAM OF THE SPECIES... IT IS A RACE OF MEN WHO WILL ONE DAY BE KNOWN AS--
THE FIRST ETERNALS
ON THIS MOMENTOUS DAY, THEY CONGREGATE ON A BLEAK ARCTIC MOUNTAIN TO WATCH ONE OF THEIR KIND PREFORM A UNIQUE GROUND BREAKING CEREMONY...
WE HAVE WANDERED THE ENTIRE SPHERE IN SEARCH OF A HOME. AND NOW, HERE ATOP THE POLAR MOUNTAINS, FAR FROM ALL OTHER LIFE...
WE WILL JOIN TOGETHER TO USE OUR GROWING POWERS OF MOLECULAR MANIPULATION TO CARVE A GLEAMING CITY OUT OF ROCK AND ICE--A CITY WE CAN CALL OUR OWN!
LEAD ON, CHRONOS!
RALPH MACCHIO WORDS
RICH BUCKLER & CHIC STONE PICTURES
J. MORELLI LETTERS
E. HANNIGAN COLORS

"FOR LONG MONTHS THEY LABORED, SPURRED BY THE COMMON DREAM OF CIVILIZATION... WHEN THEY WOULD FINALLY, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THEIR STILL BRIEF EXISTENCE, HAVE THE CHANCE TO MEDITATE UPON THEIR DESTINY FROM A STRONGHOLD.
"AND THEN, AT LAST, THE CITY THEY NAMED TITANOS WAS COMPLETED. FROM A DISTANCE, IT HAD THE LOOK OF UTTER SERENITY. BUT LISTENING TO TWO OF THE ETERNALS' MOST RESPECTED LEADERS...
"...WE LEARN THAT THE OUTER SERENITY CONCEALED SEETHING PHILOSOPHICAL DISSENSION...
HEAR ME, CHRONOS, YOUR DESIGNS FOR OUR RACE'S FUTURE ARE ABSURD! WHAT GOOD IS OUR VAST POWER IF WE DO NOT USE IT FOR OUR OWN GAIN?!
WHAT YOU PROPOSE, URANOS, SICKENS THE SOUL WITHIN ME!
NEVER! THOUGH I AM A MAN OF HONOR, I WILL GLADLY CAST AWAY MY STAFF FOR SWORD TO QUELL YOUR MAD REBELLION!
SO BE IT! THE GAUNTLET HAS BEEN DROPPED... THE TIME FOR TALK IS PAST!!
NOW ONLY WAR WILL DECIDE THE GREAT ISSUE THAT DIVIDES US!
THEN YOU ARE A FOOL! WE WERE NOT GRANTED THESE MIRACULOUS POWERS TO SPEND OUR DAYS IN IDLE CONTEMPLATION!
EVEN IF YOU SPOKE FOR THEM ALL, URANOS, IT WOULD NOT CHANGE MY MIND. THE WORLD IS NOT TO BE SUBDUED, BUT STUDIED. THERE ARE WONDERS AROUND US...
IT IS OUR LOT TO CONQUER... TO ADVANCE ON THE WEAKER WORLD AROUND US AND SUBDUE IT! AND I SAY TO YOU, CHRONOS-- THAT IN THIS, I SPEAK FOR MANY OF OUR KIND!
WONDERS YOU WOULD TRAMPLE UNDERFOOT IN YOUR BLIND AGGRESSION!
SHOULD YOU STAND IN OUR WAY, FEEBLE ONE, YOU SHALL BE TRAMPLED AS WELL.


"AND, IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED, A SAVAGE CIVIL WAR CONSUMED MANKINDS MIGHTIEST RACE. THE TWO FACTIONS BATTLED FEROCIOUSLY. THE COURAGE OF THEIR COMMITMENTS DROVE THEM...
ONWARD! ONWARD! DEATH TO THE FORCES OF THE SIMPERING CHRONOS! DEATH!
"INDEED THERE WAS DEATH... AND DEVASTATION. THE ONCE PROUD CITY OF TITANOS WAS DESTROYED IN THE RAGING CONFLAGRATION... AND MANY OF HER CITIZENS PERISHED WITH HER.
"BUT TO EVEN SUCH A STRUGGLE AS THIS, THERE HAD TO COME AN ENDING... AND IT ARRIVED ON A BODY-STREWN BATTLEFIELD, WHERE URANOS AND CHRONOS HAD MET IN SINGLE COMBAT.
YOU ARE DEFEATED, URANOS. YOUR MAD DREAM IS OVER! FOR WITH MY VICTORY OVER YOU, YOUR MEN HAVE LOST THE DESIRE TO CONTINUE!
FROM THIS MOMENT ON, THE WAY AND THE WILL OF CHRONOS SHALL PREVAIL!


"THOSE WHO FOLLOWED THE WAY OF URANOS, WERE SHACKLED AND LED TO THEIR PUNISHMENT. THEY WENT IN SILENCE... THEIR LOSS HAD NOT DIMMED THE DESIRE FOR CONQUEST.
"...IT WOULD NOW BE HE WHO PASSED JUDGEMENT AND PRESIDED OVER THE MORALITY OF THE MOMENT.
"THERE WAS NO CONTRITION IN THE HEART OF URANOS, NO SENSE OF GUILT OR REMORSE BOWED HIS HEAD... ONLY THE MADDENING KNOWLEDGE THAT HAD THE BATTLE GONE DIFFRENTLY...
"... SUCH ARE THE WAYS OF WAR AND MEN... AND SUCH ARE THEY ACCEPTED.
"THE TRIUMPHANT ETERNALS METED OUT JUSTICE TO THEIR REBELLIOUS BRETHREN... JUSTICE IN THE FORM OF BANISHMENT BEYOND THE PLANET EARTH-- TO ANOTHER WORLD THAT ONE DAY WOULD BEAR URANOS' NAME.
I NOW CAST OFF THE WAYS OF WAR FOREVER. MY LIFE WILL BE DEVOTED TO THE GREAT QUEST FOR KNOWLEDGE THAT BECKONS ME!
SKASH!
AND I MUST ADDRESS THOSE WHO HAVE STOOD FAST FOR THE CAUSE AND ANNOUNCE MY POSITION.
MY PEOPLE... WE HAVE LOST MANY OF OUR OWN IN THE PAST DAYS, BUT HERE WE STAND--UNITED! THOSE WHO WOULD SOW THE SEEDS OF DISCONTENT ARE CRUSHED.
WE MAY NOW FULFILL OUR DESTINIES WITHOUT THE POINTLESS BLOODSHED WE ABHOR! WITH PEACE AND MUTUAL TRUST OUR GOAL--WE SHALL ENDURE!


"TIME PASSED. TITANOS WAS REBUILT AND ALL THE WHILE CHRONOS LABORED IN HIS LABORATORY, PROBING THE SECRETS OF LIFE.
AT LAST I'VE ISOLATED THE UNIQUE COSMIC ENERGY THAT MAKES US SUPERIOR TO THE REST OF OUR SPECIES.
"BUT IN HIS MOMENT OF ULTIMATE TRIUMPH-- DISASTER STRUCK. THE VOLATILE TUBE SHATTERED, UNABLE TO CONTAIN THE CONCENTRATED FORCES WITHIN IT.
"A MAMMOTH EXPLOSION ENSUED-- ROCKING ALL OF TITANOS. AND CHRONOS WAS HURLED OUTWARD... OUT INTO THE VAST REACHES OF SPACE, WHERE HIS BODY DISINTEGRATED INTO COSMIC DUST.
"BUT CHRONOS DID NOT DIE. SO GREAT WERE THE LIFE ESSENCES IRRADIATING HIS FORM AT THE INSTANT OF THE EXPLOSION THAT HE SURVIVED--A BODILESS WRAITH... AN INTANGIBLE ENTITY...
"...BECOMING AS ONE WITH THE VERY UNIVERSE HE HAD PONDERED FOR SO LONG. HIS CRAVING MIND FOUND THE ANSWERS IT SOUGHT... IN THE COLD VOID.
ON EARTH, ALL WHO LIVED ON TITANOS HAD ALSO BEEN VICTIMS OF THE SPREADING RADIANCE... A RADIANCE WHICH MADE CHRONOS' PEOPLE EVEN MORE THAN THEY WERE, FOR ITS EFFECT HAD BEEN TO IMPART PRACTICAL IMMORTALITY TO THOSE WHO TOUCHED IT.
UNWITTINGLY, CHRONOS HAD BEQUEATHED THIS GIFT OF TIMELESSNESS TO THOSE HE LOVED. NOW TRULY WERE THEY... THE ETERNALS.

WHAT IF? #25

I hope many of these stories now read more like propaganda or warped memories of a more complicated truth, in the light of everything we now know. Yes, all this is true — just incomplete. For example, this is the first Unimind. The Unimind is one of the big, iconic Eternals ideas, and it's interesting to see it here in its "earliest" form — not as a weapon, but as a senate. That's where the Unimind as the founding of the democracy of the Eternals comes from. My tweaks mean that in the age of the patriarchs prior to this, the Unimind was dominated by them... which means that this is still the first Unimind. It's just the first that works in our Eternals' modern way. I really tried to at least have an interpretation of all earlier stories that was at least kinda true.

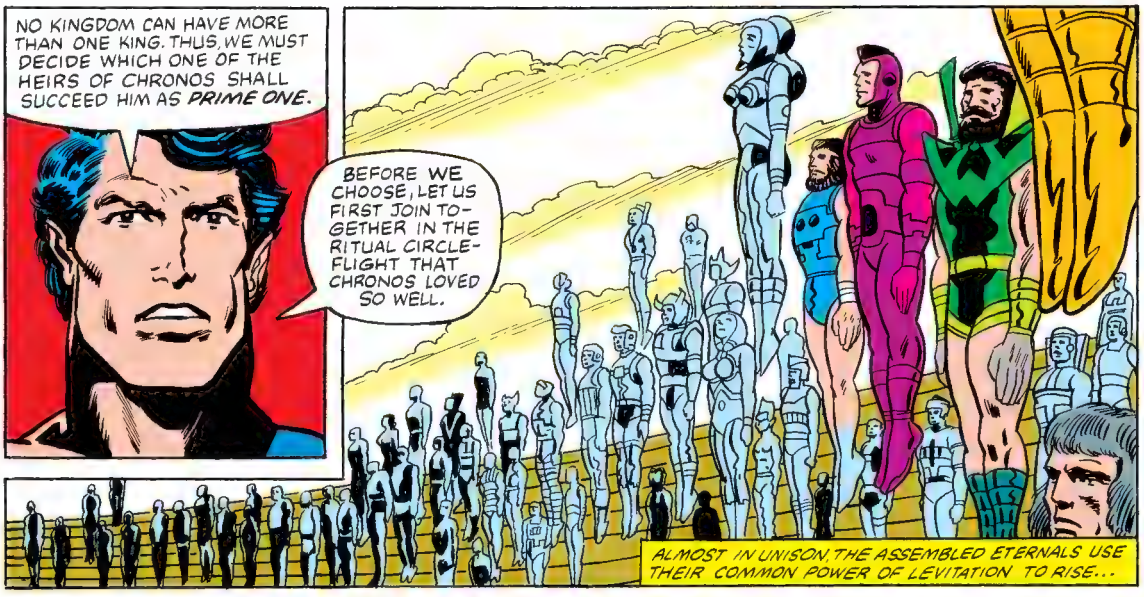
— **Kieron Gillen**

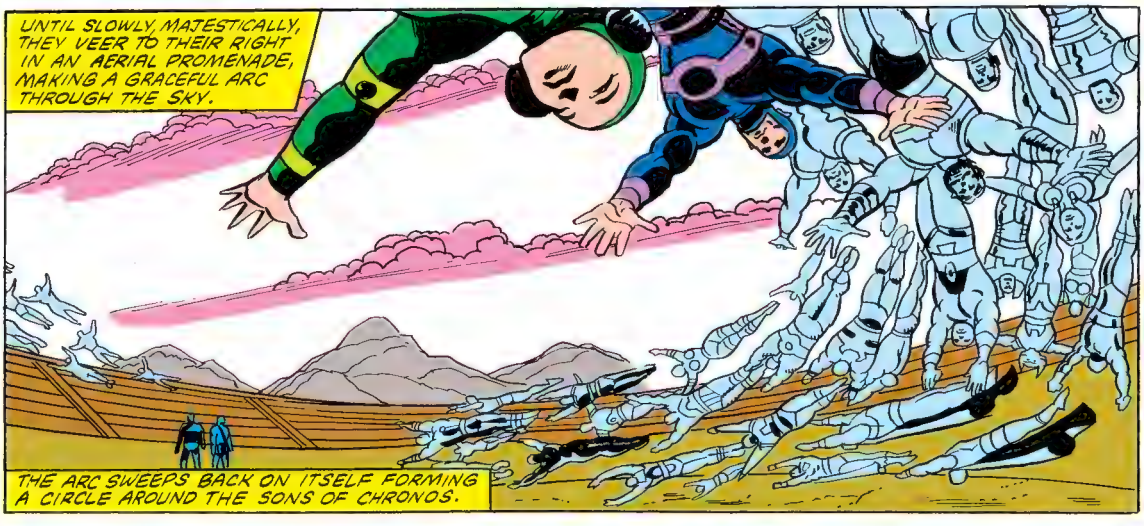
WRITER **MARK GRUENWALD** PENCILER **RON WILSON**
INKER **ALAN KUPPERBERG** COLORIST **NEL YOMTOV** LETTERER **JACK MORELLI**

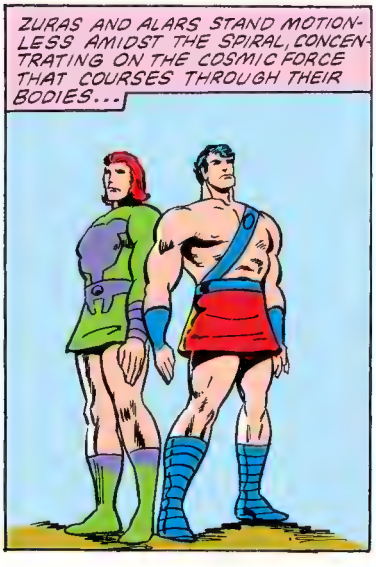
Stan Lee PRESENTS: UNTOLD TALES OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE!
I AM THE WATCHER... AND THOUGH I SOMETIMES RELATE EVENTS THAT DIVERGE FROM OUR OWN, MY PRIMARY TASK IS TO MONITOR THE EARTH OF OUR UNIVERSE. I HAVE OBSERVED THIS WORLD FROM ITS INFANCY AND I HAVE SEEN ITS HISTORY UNFOLD...
THE FIRST
UNI-MIND
WITNESS, IF YOU WILL, THIS SCENE FROM REMOTEST PRE-HISTORY... THE AWESOME AFTER-MATH OF A GREAT CATACLYSM. MERE MINUTES AGO, THE CITY OF TITANOS, HOME OF THE HIGHLY-ADVANCED OFF-SHOOT OF HUMANITY CALLED THE ETERNALS, STOOD PROUD AND TALL AMIDST THE POLAR MOUNTAINS. NOW, BY FORCES YET UNFATHOMED, IT LIES IN SMOLDERING RUIN.
ZURAS, MY BROTHER--WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO OUR CITY? WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO US?
I DON'T KNOW, ALARS, BUT THE EXPLOSION HAS LEFT ME FEELING CHANGED SOMEHOW--AS IF IMBUED WITH BOUNDLESS ENERGY!
GRUENWALD WORDS
WILSON/KUPPERBERG PICTURES
MORELLI LETTERS
YOMTOV COLORS

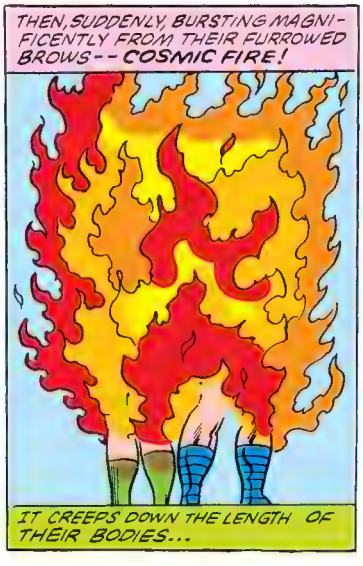
ALTHOUGH THE ENTIRE CITY HAS BEEN LEVELED, I HAVE NOT GLIMPSED A SINGLE CASUALTY! WHAT MANNER OF EXPLOSION COULD HAVE CAUSED SUCH SELECTIVE DAMAGE?
I DON'T KNOW. I WAS FACING FATHER CHRONOS' LABORATORY WHEN THE BLAST OCCURRED.
I COULD HAVE SWORN I SAW A FLASH ISSUE FORTH FROM THERE INSTANTS BEFORE THE EXPLOSION!
FATHER'S COSMIC LIFE FORCE EXPERIMENTS! YOU DON'T SUPPOSE--?
LET US SEE.
SOON...
THE DEVASTATION HERE IS MORE SEVERE THAN ELSEWHERE.
I SEE NO SIGN OF CHRONOS.
"SUDDENLY, AMIDST THE WRECKAGE... A SPECTRAL VISAGE SHIMMERS INTO VIEW...
HEAR ME, MY SONS. I HAVE NOT MUCH... TIME.
FATHER!
IN THE DAYS BEFORE YOU WERE BORN, A GREAT WAR BROKE OUT AMONG THE FIRST GENERATION OF TITANOS--BETWEEN MY FOLLOWERS AND THOSE OF MY BROTHER, URANOS...
"CASUALTIES AMONG OUR KIND WERE STAGGERING. BUT A TENTH OF OUR POPULATION SURVIVED.
"WHEN MY FACTION WON AND MY BROTHER WAS FORCED INTO EXILE, I SWORE NEVER TO ALLOW WAR TO DIVIDE OUR PEOPLE AGAIN.
"I DEDICATED MYSELF TO MAKING OUR CITY A PARADISE-- A PLACE OF PEACE AND LEARNING-- AN OLYMPUS!
"BUT OF ALL THE GOOD I TRIED TO BRING INTO THE WORLD--YOU, MY ELDEST SONS-- WERE THE FINEST.

"WATCHING YOU GROW TO MATURITY, I VOWED TO DO ALL IN MY POWER TO SEE THAT NONE OF YOUR GENERATION WOULD EVER KNOW THE MEANING OF DEATH...
"AND SO I BEGAN TO PROBE THE SECRETS OF LIFE--THE RIDDLE OF THE COSMOS.
"JUST TODAY I MADE A BREAKTHROUGH. I SUCCEEDED IN ISOLATING THE ENERGY SOURCE OF LIFE ITSELF--THE ESSENCE OF IMMORTALITY.
"BUT THE TUBE CONTAINING THE COSMIC FORCE RUPTURED THE MOMENT I GRASPED IT.
"IT WAS THE EXPLOSIVE RELEASE OF THAT INCOMPREHENSIBLE ENERGY THAT DESTROYED OUR CITY. CLOSEST TO THE BLAST, MY CORPOREAL BODY DISINTEGRATED...
BUT EVEN AS MY ATOMS WERE SCATTERED TO INFINITY, MY CONSCIOUSNESS WAS INFUSED WITH LIFE. IN DEATH I HAVE ATTAINED IMMORTALITY.
MOREOVER, THE COSMIC RADIANCE HAS AFFECTED YOU, AND ALL WHO DWELL HERE.
NOW AND FOREVERMORE, OUR KIND SHALL NEVER SUCCUMB TO DEATH. WE ARE ETERNAL.
I MUST NOW LEAVE YOU. THE UNIVERSE CALLS. PROMISE ME, MY SONS, TO RULE WISELY IN MY STEAD--NEVER TO LIFT A HAND AGAINST ONE ANOTHER AS I DID AGAINST MY BROTHER.
WE SWEAR!
FAREWELL, ZURAS... ALARS. I SHALL BE WITH YOU IN ETERNITY.
WE MUST SUMMON THE MULTITUDE... TELL THEM OF OUR VISION.
SOON, IN THE RUINS OF A GREAT ARENA...
HEAR US, PEOPLE OF TITANOS. GREAT CHRONOS IS DEAD. BUT IN DYING HE HAS BEQUEATHED US LIFE EVERLASTING. FROM THIS DAY FORTH WE ARE ETERNALS!
WE GATHER HERE TODAY NOT ONLY TO HONOR THE MEMORY OF OUR BENEFACTOR, BUT TO DETERMINE THE DESTINY OF OUR SPECIES.

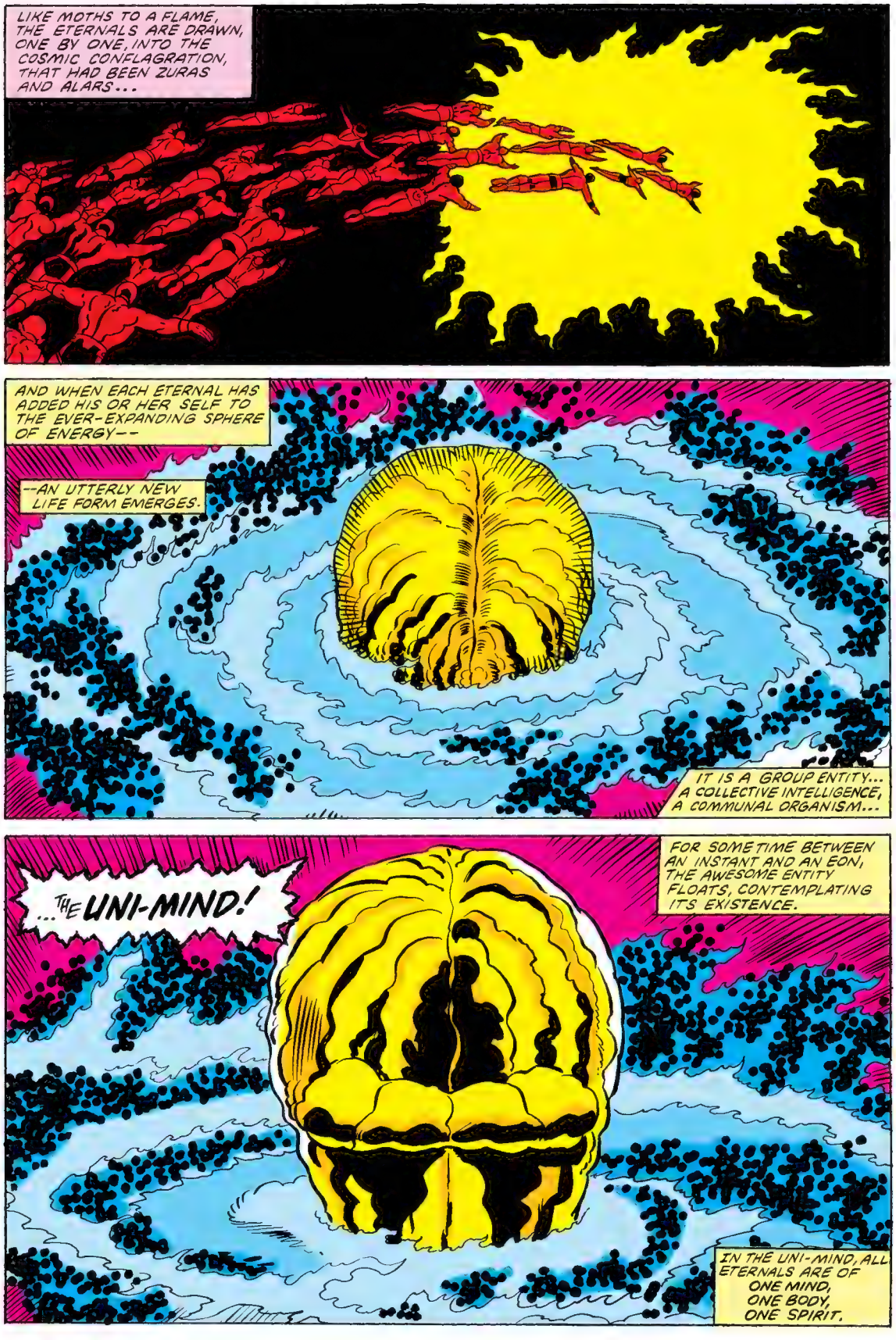

NO KINGDOM CAN HAVE MORE THAN ONE KING. THUS, WE MUST DECIDE WHICH ONE OF THE HEIRS OF CHRONOS SHALL SUCCEED HIM AS PRIME ONE.
BEFORE WE CHOOSE, LET US FIRST JOIN TOGETHER IN THE RITUAL CIRCLE-FLIGHT THAT CHRONOS LOVED SO WELL.
ALMOST IN UNISON, THE ASSEMBLED ETERNALS USE THEIR COMMON POWER OF LEVITATION TO RISE...


UNTIL SLOWLY, MAJESTICALLY, THEY VEER TO THEIR RIGHT IN AN AERIAL PROMENADE, MAKING A GRACEFUL ARC THROUGH THE SKY.
THE ARC SWEEPS BACK ON ITSELF FORMING A CIRCLE AROUND THE SONS OF CHRONOS.


ZURAS AND ALARS STAND MOTIONLESS AMIDST THE SPIRAL, CONCENTRATING ON THE COSMIC FORCE THAT COURSES THROUGH THEIR BODIES...


THEN, SUDDENLY, BURSTING MAGNIFICENTLY FROM THEIR FURROWED BROWS--COSMIC FIRE!
IT CREEPS DOWN THE LENGTH OF THEIR BODIES...

...UNTIL THEIR ENTIRE CORPOREAL FORMS HAVE BEEN CONVERTED INTO LIVING ENERGY.


LIKE MOTHS TO A FLAME, THE ETERNALS ARE DRAWN, ONE BY ONE, INTO THE COSMIC CONFLAGRATION, THAT HAD BEEN ZURAS AND ALARS...
AND WHEN EACH ETERNAL HAS ADDED HIS OR HER SELF TO THE EVER-EXPANDING SPHERE OF ENERGY--
--AN UTTERLY NEW LIFE FORM EMERGES.
IT IS A GROUP ENTITY... A COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE, A COMMUNAL ORGANISM...
FOR SOME TIME BETWEEN AN INSTANT AND AN EON, THE AWESOME ENTITY FLOATS, CONTEMPLATING ITS EXISTENCE.
...THE UNI-MIND!
IN THE UNI-MIND, ALL ETERNALS ARE OF ONE MIND, ONE BODY, ONE SPIRIT.

THEN, HAVING ATTAINED ITS ULTIMATE STATE AND ACHIEVED TOTAL UNITY, THE UNI-MIND BEGINS TO DISINTEGRATE INTO ITS COMPONENT PARTS...
AND THE ETERNALS WHO PARTICIPATED IN ITS CREATION EMERGE WITH NEW INSIGHTS, NEW PERCEPTIONS, NEW KNOWLEDGE...
FINALLY, THE BRILLIANT BLUE FIRE ITSELF RETREATS INTO THE BODIES OF THE MEN WHO SUMMONED IT...
CHRONOS HAS LEFT US ALL WITH YET ANOTHER LEGACY--THE ABILITY TO MERGE OURSELVES INTO A SINGLE SUPER-INTELLIGENCE.
AND IN THAT STATE, WHAT IS KNOWN BY ONE IS KNOWN TO ALL. IT IS THE WILL OF THE MAJORITY THAT YOU, ZURAS, BECOME CHRONOS' SUCCESSOR. SO BE IT!
I KNOW NOW THAT OUR PROGRAMS FOR POSTERITY ARE FAR TOO DISSIMILAR TO PEACEABLY COEXIST, ZURAS. SO TO PREVENT THE DISUNITY WE SWORE TO CHRONOS WE WOULD AVOID--
I SHALL TAKE MY LEAVE OF YOU ALL.
PERHAPS AMONG THE STARS I SHALL REALIZE MY OWN DESTINY.
FAREWELL, ALARS! YOU ARE A GOOD AND NOBLE BEING--NOBLER PERHAPS THAN I WOULD BE IN YOUR POSITION.
MAY YOU FIND PEACE.
COME, MY PEOPLE ... THERE IS MUCH TO BE DONE.
END.

WHAT IF? #26

Perhaps a key element here — despite it being a war between all the Eternals, there are only two dozen of Uranos' loyalists who go here. This actually fits surprisingly closely with my later idea that there have only *ever* been one hundred Eternals. Twenty-four or so is close to the third you'd expect to be loyal to a patriarch. This shows that sometimes you don't have to tweak things at all. The Oceanic Watch became those who were most fanatically loyal — and as we see in this story, there are some among the numbers who clearly have mixed feelings about all of this.

— Kieron Gillen

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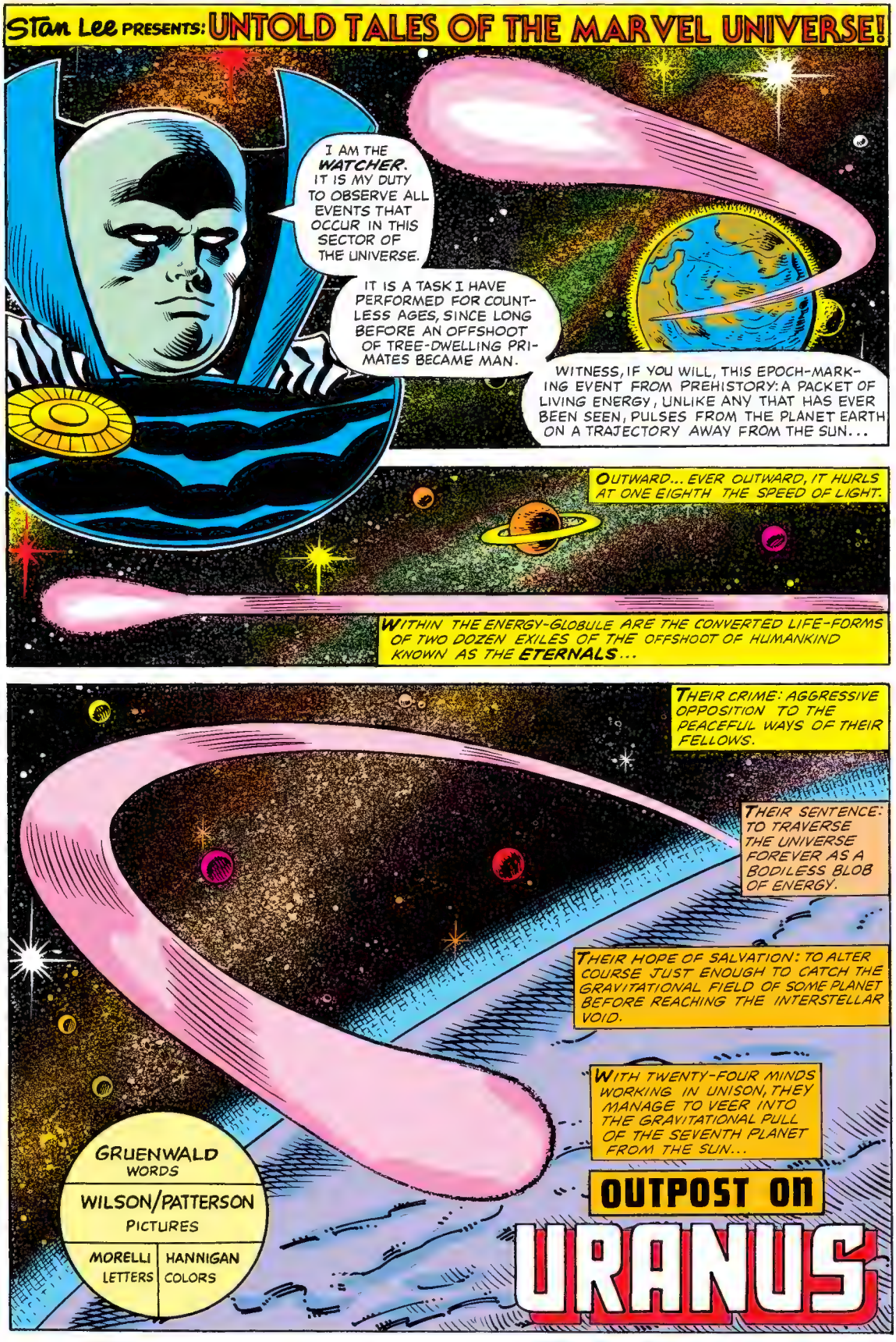
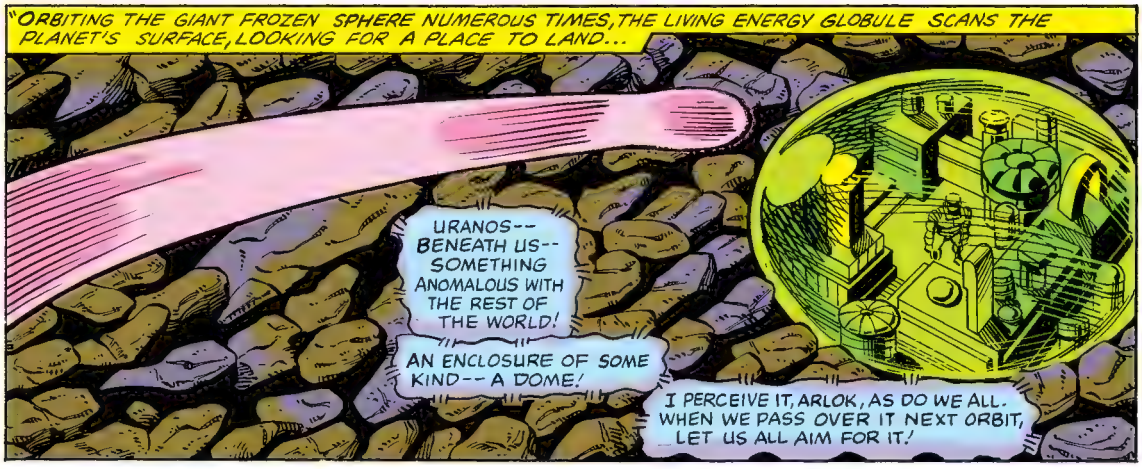
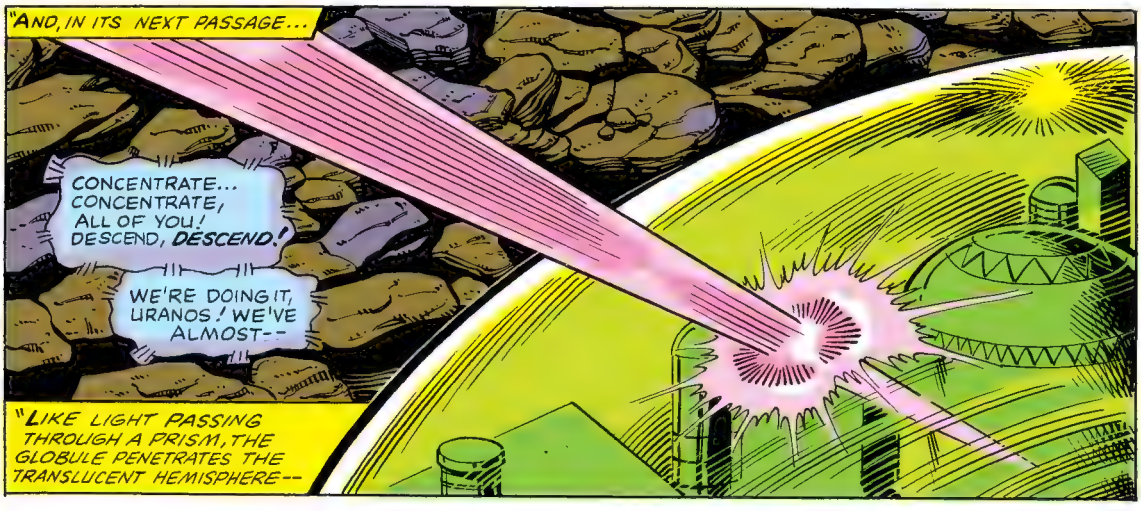
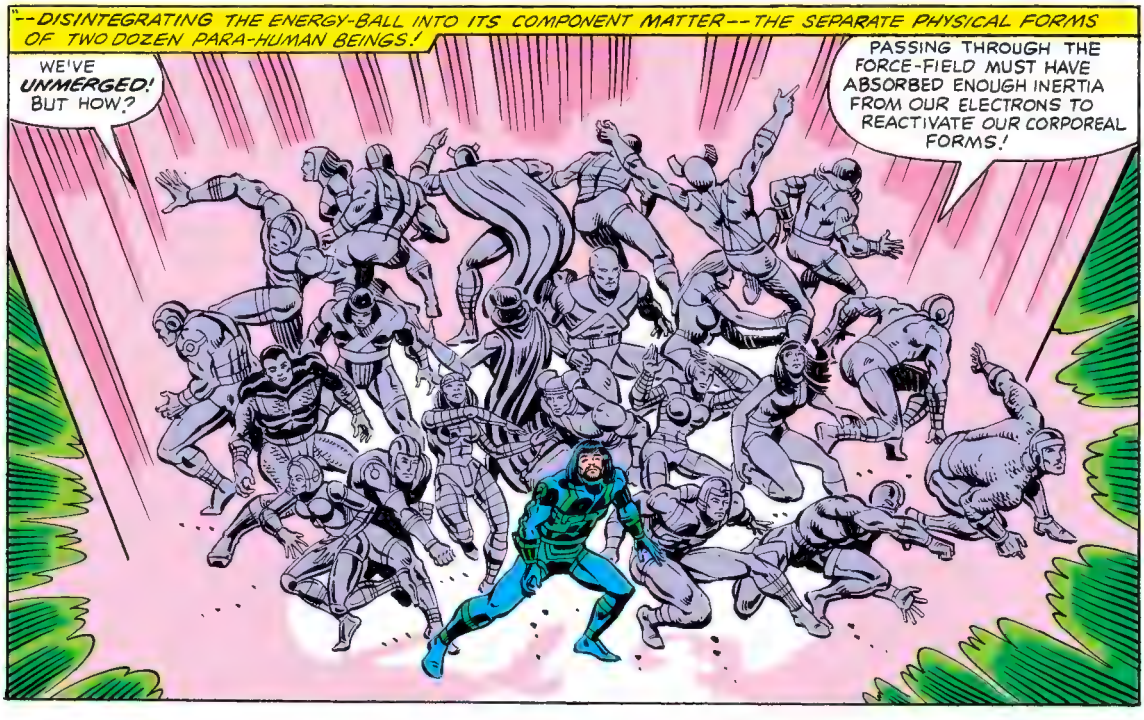
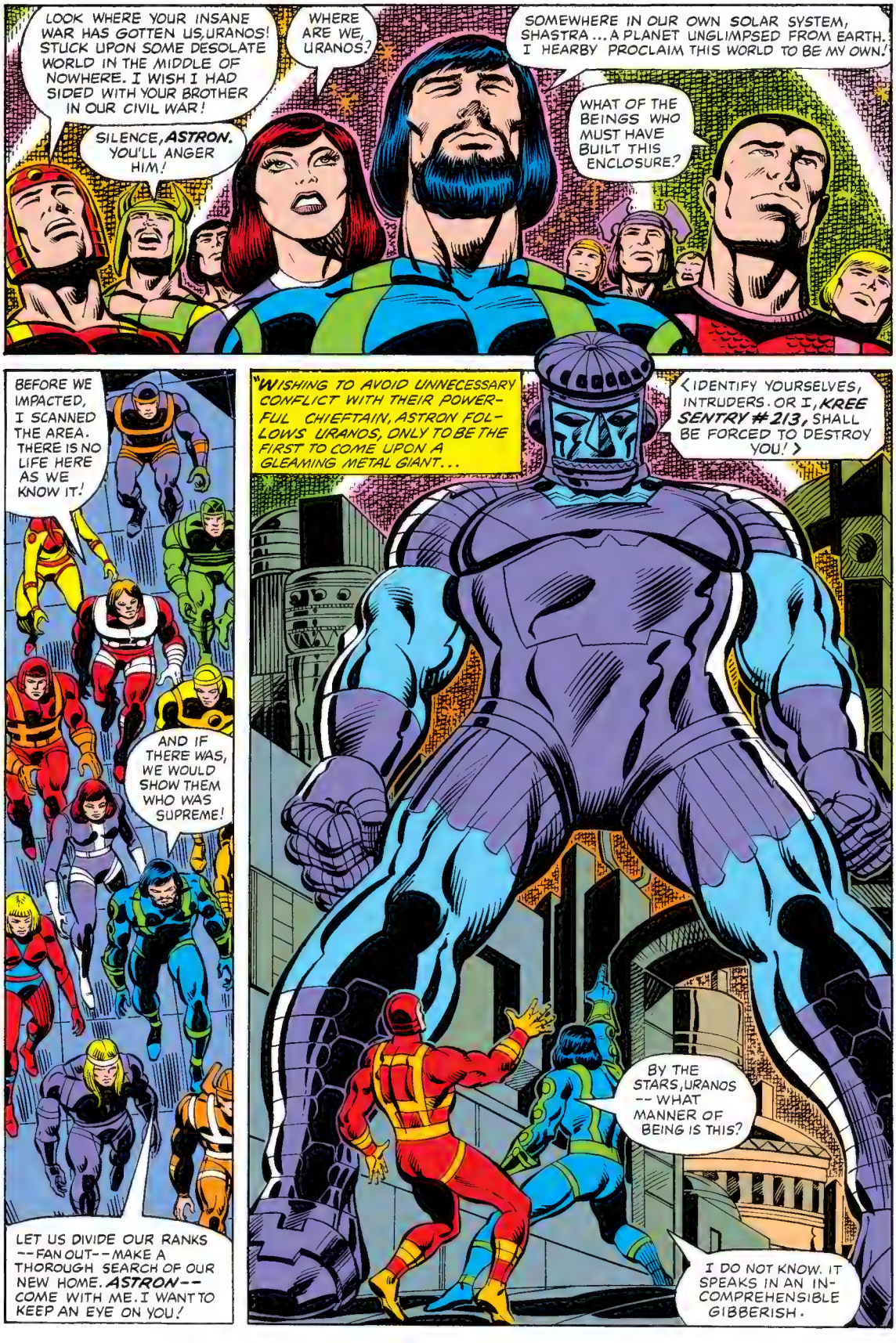
WRITER **MARK GRUENWALD** PENCILER **RON WILSON**
INKER **BRUCE PATTERSON** COLORIST **ED HANNIGAN** LETTERER **JACK MORELLI**

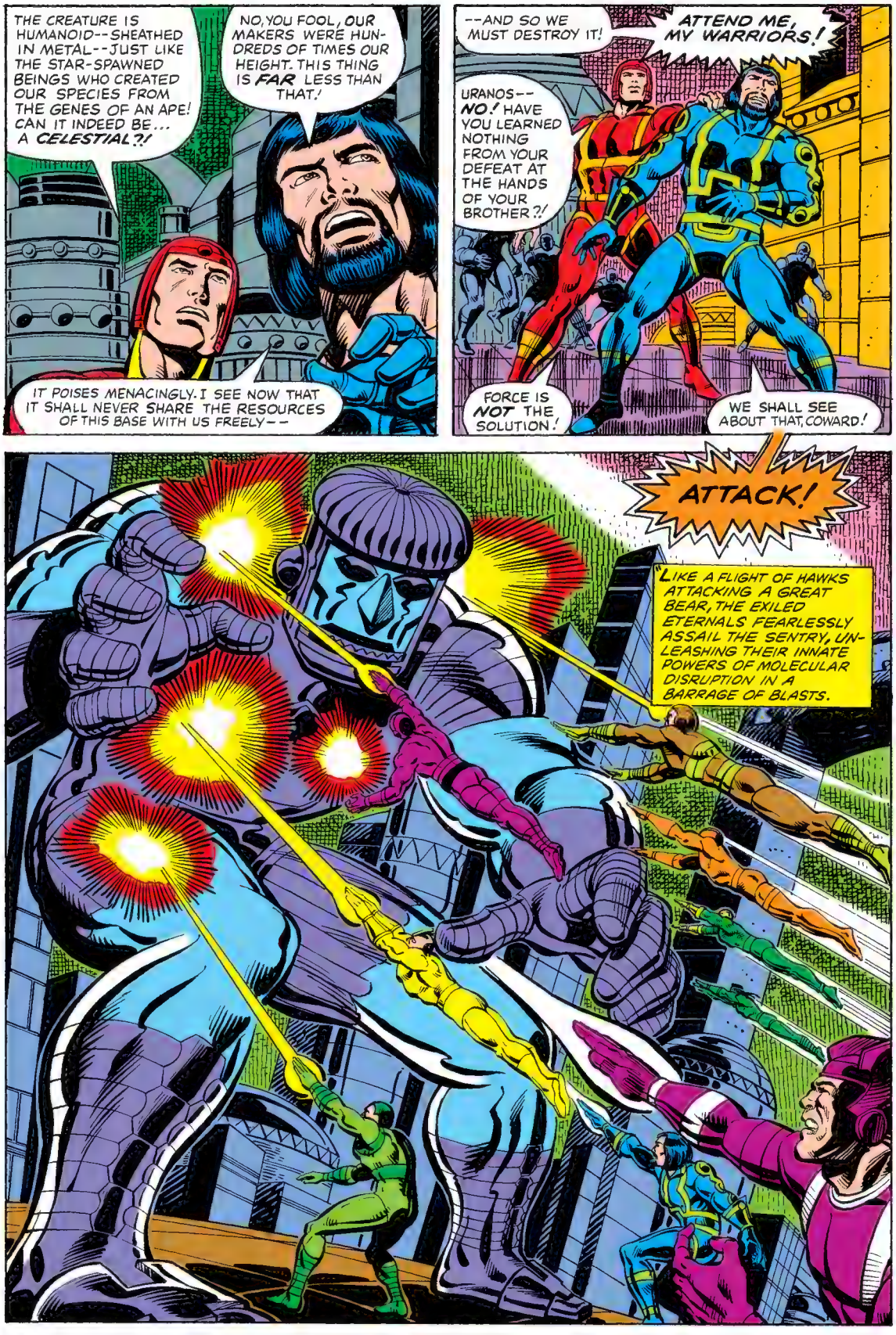

Stan Lee PRESENTS: UNTOLD TALES OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE!
I AM THE WATCHER. IT IS MY DUTY TO OBSERVE ALL EVENTS THAT OCCUR IN THIS SECTOR OF THE UNIVERSE.
IT IS A TASK I HAVE PERFORMED FOR COUNTLESS AGES, SINCE LONG BEFORE AN OFFSHOOT OF TREE-DWELLING PRIMATES BECAME MAN.
WITNESS, IF YOU WILL, THIS EPOCH-MARKING EVENT FROM PREHISTORY: A PACKET OF LIVING ENERGY, UNLIKE ANY THAT HAS EVER BEEN SEEN, PULSES FROM THE PLANET EARTH ON A TRAJECTORY AWAY FROM THE SUN...
OUTWARD... EVER OUTWARD, IT HURLS AT ONE EIGHTH THE SPEED OF LIGHT.
WITHIN THE ENERGY-GLOBULE ARE THE CONVERTED LIFE-FORMS OF TWO DOZEN EXILES OF THE OFFSHOOT OF HUMANKIND KNOWN AS THE ETERNALS...
THEIR CRIME: AGGRESSIVE OPPOSITION TO THE PEACEFUL WAYS OF THEIR FELLOWS.
THEIR SENTENCE: TO TRAVERSE THE UNIVERSE FOREVER AS A BODILESS BLOB OF ENERGY.
THEIR HOPE OF SALVATION: TO ALTER COURSE JUST ENOUGH TO CATCH THE GRAVITATIONAL FIELD OF SOME PLANET BEFORE REACHING THE INTERSTELLAR VOID.
WITH TWENTY-FOUR MINDS WORKING IN UNISON, THEY MANAGE TO VEER INTO THE GRAVITATIONAL PULL OF THE SEVENTH PLANET FROM THE SUN...
GRUENWALD WORDS
WILSON/PATTERSON PICTURES
MORELLI LETTERS
HANNIGAN COLORS
OUTPOST ON URANUS


"ORBITING THE GIANT FROZEN SPHERE NUMEROUS TIMES, THE LIVING ENERGY GLOBULE SCANS THE PLANET'S SURFACE, LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO LAND...
URANOS-- BENEATH US-- SOMETHING ANOMALOUS WITH THE REST OF THE WORLD!
AN ENCLOSURE OF SOME KIND-- A DOME!
I PERCEIVE IT, ARLOK, AS DO WE ALL. WHEN WE PASS OVER IT NEXT ORBIT, LET US ALL AIM FOR IT!

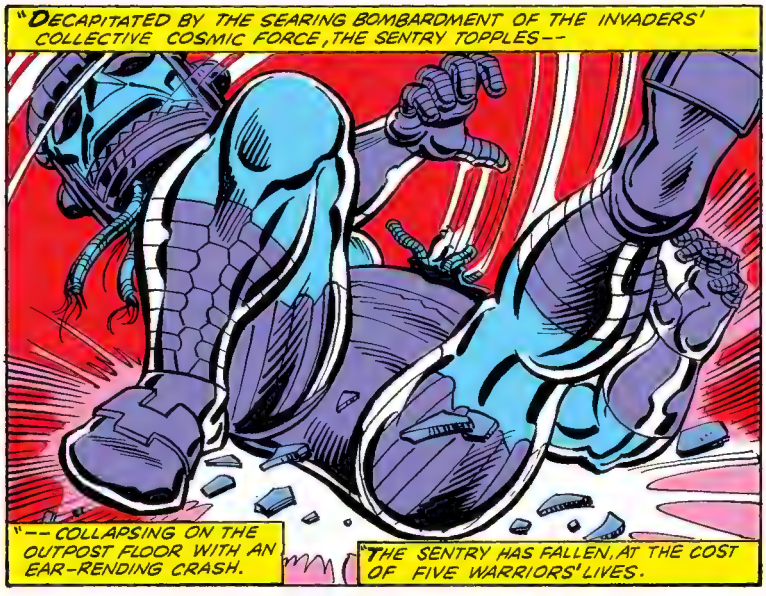

"AND, IN ITS NEXT PASSAGE...
CONCENTRATE... CONCENTRATE, ALL OF YOU! DESCEND, DESCEND!
WE'RE DOING IT, URANOS! WE'VE ALMOST--
"LIKE LIGHT PASSING THROUGH A PRISM, THE GLOBULE PENETRATES THE TRANSLUCENT HEMISPHERE--

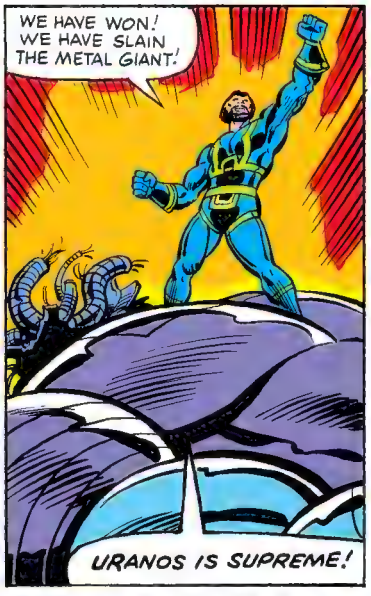

"--DISINTEGRATING THE ENERGY-BALL INTO ITS COMPONENT MATTER--THE SEPARATE PHYSICAL FORMS OF TWO DOZEN PARA-HUMAN BEINGS!
WE'VE UNMERGED! BUT HOW?
PASSING THROUGH THE FORCE-FIELD MUST HAVE ABSORBED ENOUGH INERTIA FROM OUR ELECTRONS TO REACTIVATE OUR CORPOREAL FORMS!

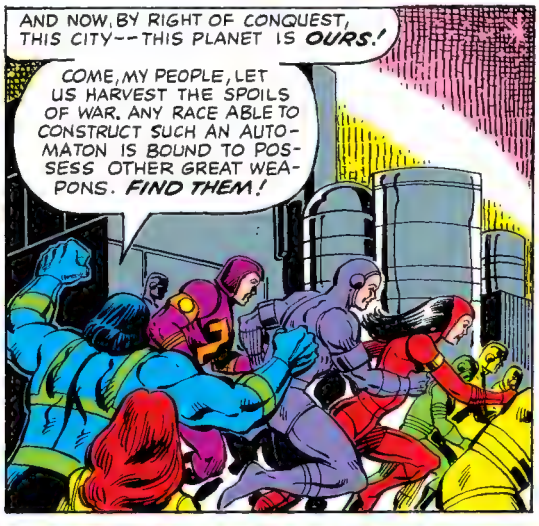

LOOK WHERE YOUR INSANE WAR HAS GOTTEN US, URANOS! STUCK UPON SOME DESOLATE WORLD IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE. I WISH I HAD SIDED WITH YOUR BROTHER IN OUR CIVIL WAR!
WHERE ARE WE, URANOS?
SILENCE, ASTRON. YOU'LL ANGER HIM!
SOMEWHERE IN OUR OWN SOLAR SYSTEM, SHASTRA... A PLANET UNGLIMPSED FROM EARTH. I HEARBY PROCLAIM THIS WORLD TO BE MY OWN!
WHAT OF THE BEINGS WHO MUST HAVE BUILT THIS ENCLOSURE?
BEFORE WE IMPACTED, I SCANNED THE AREA. THERE IS NO LIFE HERE AS WE KNOW IT!
AND IF THERE WAS, WE WOULD SHOW THEM WHO WAS SUPREME!
LET US DIVIDE OUR RANKS --FAN OUT-- MAKE A THOROUGH SEARCH OF OUR NEW HOME. ASTRON-- COME WITH ME. I WANT TO KEEP AN EYE ON YOU!
"WISHING TO AVOID UNNECESSARY CONFLICT WITH THEIR POWERFUL CHIEFTAIN, ASTRON FOLLOWS URANOS, ONLY TO BE THE FIRST TO COME UPON A GLEAMING METAL GIANT...
<IDENTIFY YOURSELVES, INTRUDERS. OR I, KREE SENTRY #213, SHALL BE FORCED TO DESTROY YOU!>
BY THE STARS, URANOS -- WHAT MANNER OF BEING IS THIS?
I DO NOT KNOW. IT SPEAKS IN AN INCOMPREHENSIBLE GIBBERISH.

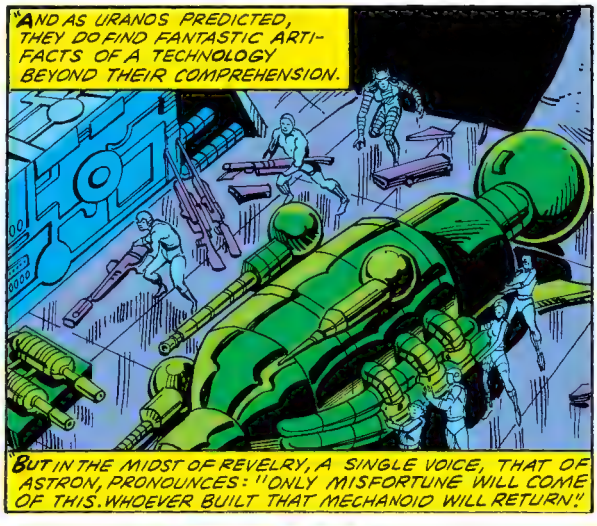

THE CREATURE IS HUMANOID--SHEATHED IN METAL--JUST LIKE THE STAR-SPAWNED BEINGS WHO CREATED OUR SPECIES FROM THE GENES OF AN APE! CAN IT INDEED BE... A CELESTIAL?!
NO, YOU FOOL, OUR MAKERS WERE HUNDREDS OF TIMES OUR HEIGHT. THIS THING IS FAR LESS THAN THAT.
IT POISES MENACINGLY. I SEE NOW THAT IT SHALL NEVER SHARE THE RESOURCES OF THIS BASE WITH US FREELY--
--AND SO WE MUST DESTROY IT!
ATTEND ME, MY WARRIORS!
URANOS--NO! HAVE YOU LEARNED NOTHING FROM YOUR DEFEAT AT THE HANDS OF YOUR BROTHER?!
FORCE IS NOT THE SOLUTION!
WE SHALL SEE ABOUT THAT, COWARD!
ATTACK!
"LIKE A FLIGHT OF HAWKS ATTACKING A GREAT BEAR, THE EXILED ETERNALS FEARLESSLY ASSAIL THE SENTRY, UNLEASHING THEIR INNATE POWERS OF MOLECULAR DISRUPTION IN A BARRAGE OF BLASTS.

"AND THEN THE SENTRY RETALIATES WITH THE SPEED AND FEROCITY WHICH HAS MADE HIS KIND FEARED THROUGHOUT THE GALAXY...
<I AM PROGRAMMED TO DEFEND MYSELF FROM ANY AND ALL ATTACK!>
<YOUR AGGRESSION BRANDS YOU AS ENEMIES OF THE KREE EMPIRE. THUS, IT IS MY DUTY TO EXTERMINATE YOU.>
OUR BLASTS DO NOT SEEM TO FAZE HIM.
HE MUST HAVE A WEAK SPOT SOMEWHERE!
THIS IS INSANE--SIMPLY INSANE!
WE SHOULD BE TRYING TO COMMUNICATE WITH IT, NOT DESTROY IT!
THE LINES HAVE ALREADY BEEN DRAWN, ASTRON, THEY HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO CONTINUE!
COME, MY GOOD AND LOYAL WARRIORS--
--WE MUST JOIN TOGETHER OUR COSMIC MIGHT--STRIKE!
<PUNY ORGANICS--YOU SHALL N-=>
BLAM

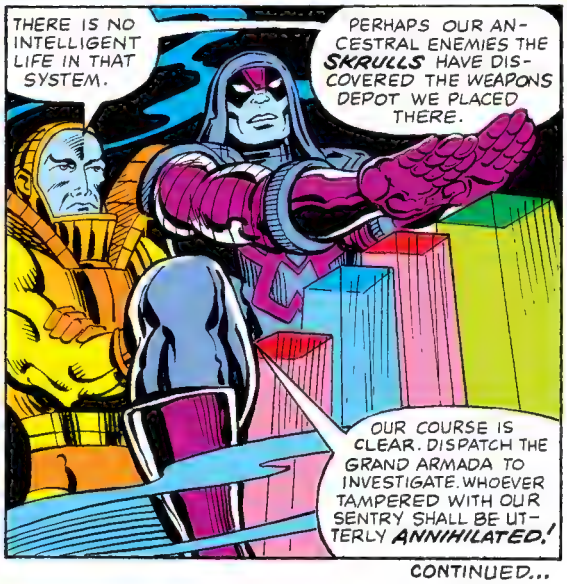

"DECAPITATED BY THE SEARING BOMBARDMENT OF THE INVADERS' COLLECTIVE COSMIC FORCE, THE SENTRY TOPPLES--
"--COLLAPSING ON THE OUTPOST FLOOR WITH AN EAR-RENDING CRASH.
THE SENTRY HAS FALLEN. AT THE COST OF FIVE WARRIORS' LIVES.


WE HAVE WON! WE HAVE SLAIN THE METAL GIANT!
URANOS IS SUPREME!


AND NOW, BY RIGHT OF CONQUEST, THIS CITY--THIS PLANET IS OURS!
COME, MY PEOPLE, LET US HARVEST THE SPOILS OF WAR. ANY RACE ABLE TO CONSTRUCT SUCH AN AUTOMATON IS BOUND TO POSSESS OTHER GREAT WEAPONS. FIND THEM!


"AND AS URANOS PREDICTED, THEY DO FIND FANTASTIC ARTIFACTS OF A TECHNOLOGY BEYOND THEIR COMPREHENSION.
BUT IN THE MIDST OF REVELRY, A SINGLE VOICE, THAT OF ASTRON, PRONOUNCES: "ONLY MISFORTUNE WILL COME OF THIS. WHOEVER BUILT THAT MECHANOID WILL RETURN!"

"AND, AT THE VERY HEART OF THE KREE EMPIRE, COUNTLESS LIGHT YEARS DISTANT...
IMPERIAL KORATH! TELEMETRY INDICATES THAT SENTRY #213 HAS CEASED TO FUNCTION!
LOCATION?
SECTOR 1260... SEVENTH PLANET OF THE SOL SYSTEM.


THERE IS NO INTELLIGENT LIFE IN THAT SYSTEM.
PERHAPS OUR ANCESTRAL ENEMIES THE SKRULLS HAVE DISCOVERED THE WEAPONS DEPOT WE PLACED THERE.
OUR COURSE IS CLEAR. DISPATCH THE GRAND ARMADA TO INVESTIGATE. WHOEVER TAMPERED WITH OUR SENTRY SHALL BE UTTERLY ANNIHILATED!

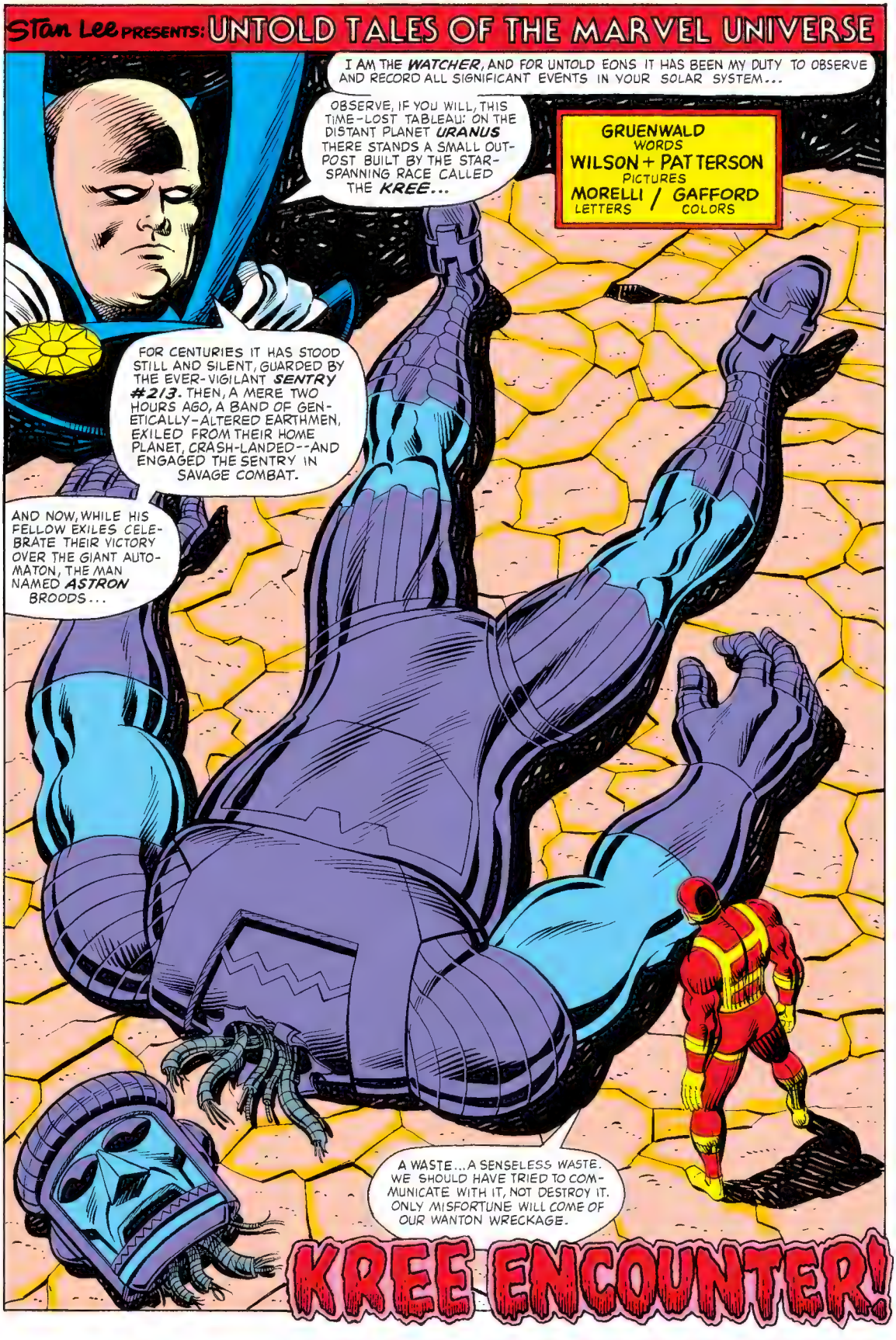
CONTINUED...

WHAT IF? #27

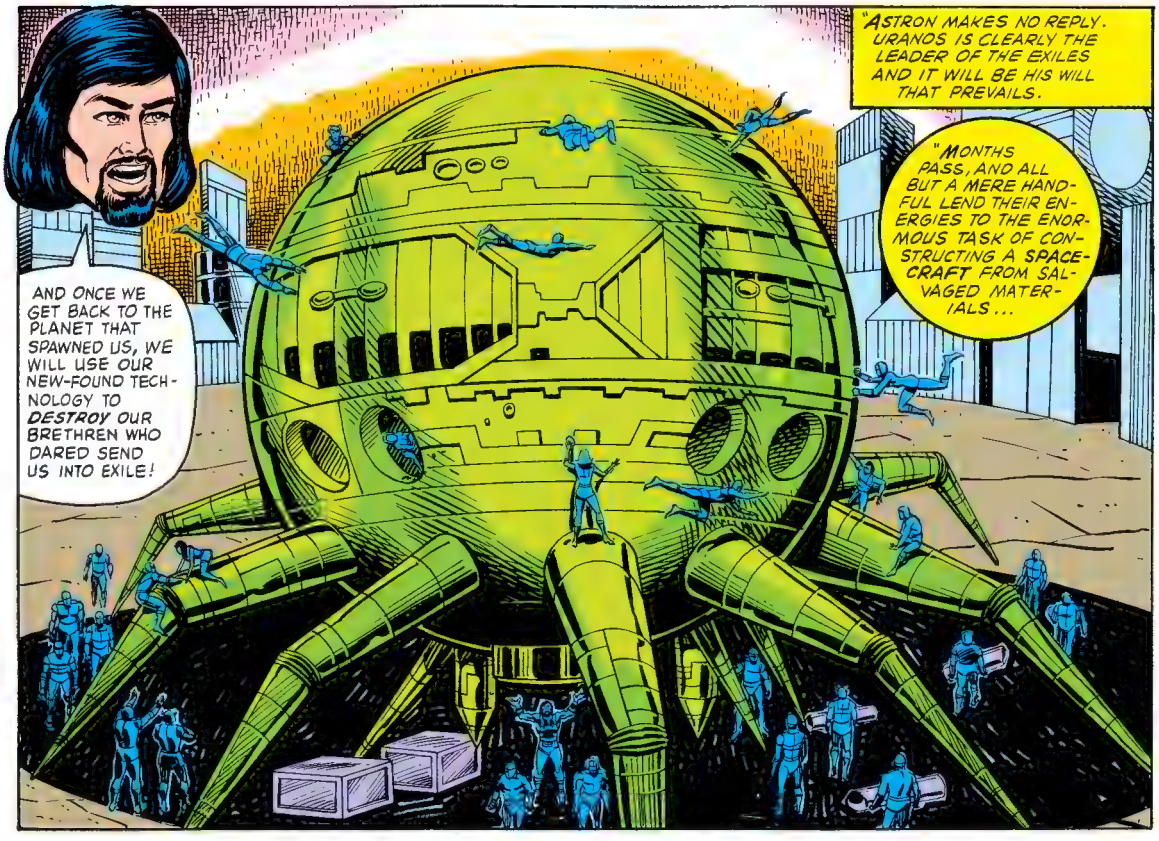
I set up that the Uranos who left was a copy, as the "real" one was on Earth, as I felt it stressed how many (though not all) of those who followed Uranos were fanatics. They couldn't let go, so they tried to create something that would let them carry on and pretend everything was normal. Plus, I felt it kept Uranos more threatening if he wasn't lost in space like this, more mythic. In a minor element, look at the ship Uranos builds here. It's not shaped like a spaceship. This is shaped like a planet, which aligns with my idea that Uranos' plan is to turn all of Earth into a battleship. If you take a veiled truth reading of these shorts, perhaps the Uranos clone actually weaponised the planet Uranus or one of its many moons? Or perhaps he's obsessed by sphere attack ships?

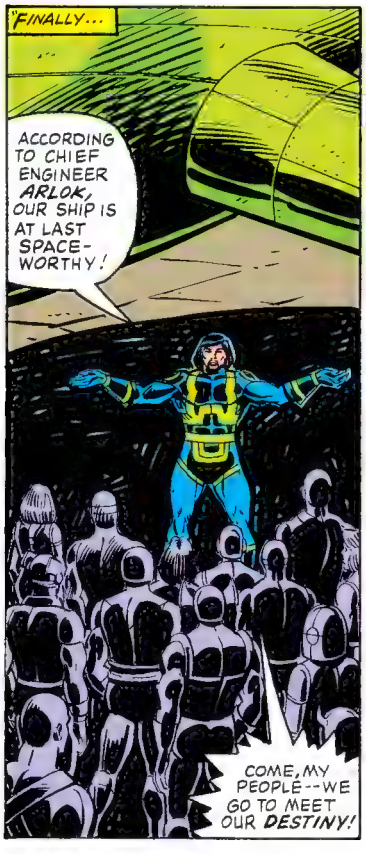
— **Kieron Gillen**

WRITER **MARK GRUENWALD** PENCILER **RON WILSON**
INKER **BRUCE PATTERSON** COLORIST **CARL GAFFORD** LETTERER **JACK MORELLI**


Stan Lee presents: UNTOLD TALES OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE
I AM THE WATCHER, AND FOR UNTOLD EONS IT HAS BEEN MY DUTY TO OBSERVE AND RECORD ALL SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN YOUR SOLAR SYSTEM...
OBSERVE, IF YOU WILL, THIS TIME-LOST TABLEAU: ON THE DISTANT PLANET URANUS THERE STANDS A SMALL OUTPOST BUILT BY THE STAR-SPANNING RACE CALLED THE KREE...
GRUENWALD WORDS
WILSON + PATTERSON PICTURES
MORELLI LETTERS / GAFFORD COLORS
FOR CENTURIES IT HAS STOOD STILL AND SILENT, GUARDED BY THE EVER-VIGILANT SENTRY #213. THEN, A MERE TWO HOURS AGO, A BAND OF GENETICALLY-ALTERED EARTHMEN, EXILED FROM THEIR HOME PLANET, CRASH-LANDED--AND ENGAGED THE SENTRY IN SAVAGE COMBAT.
AND NOW, WHILE HIS FELLOW EXILES CELEBRATE THEIR VICTORY OVER THE GIANT AUTOMATON, THE MAN NAMED ASTRON BROODS...
A WASTE...A SENSELESS WASTE. WE SHOULD HAVE TRIED TO COMMUNICATE WITH IT, NOT DESTROY IT. ONLY MISFORTUNE WILL COME OF OUR WANTON WRECKAGE.
KREE ENCOUNTER!

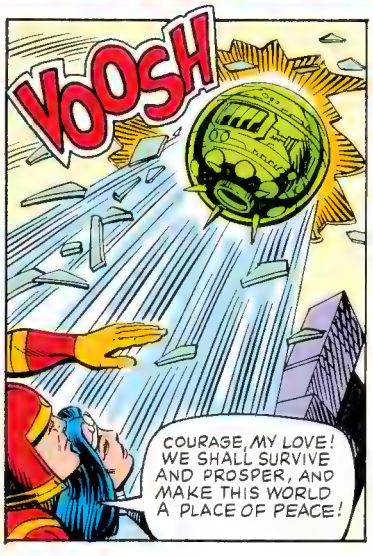
I TRIED TO STOP THEM, BUT OUR MAD LEADER URANOS LED THEM ON. HOW I CURSE THE DAY I CAST MY LOT WITH HIM.
ASTRON--ASTRON! LOOK WHAT I HAVE!
URANOS LED A RAID ON THE ARSENALS AND SUPPLY DEPOTS AND WE'VE DISCOVERED ALL SORTS OF FANTASTIC WEAPONS AND DEVICES. SEE THESE SPARKLING BRACELETS? WHO KNOWS WHAT POWER THEY HOLD?
WHY SO DOUR, MY LOVE?
I MUST SPEAK WITH URANOS.
I MUST TRY AGAIN TO STOP HIM BEFORE WE ALL SUCCUMB TO HIS MADNESS!
"SOON...
URANOS... I MUST HAVE WORDS WITH YOU. AS I TRIED TO WARN YOU EARLIER, OUR DESTRUCTION OF THE SENTRY IS BOUND TO BE NOTICED.
WHOEVER BUILT THAT ROBOT AND LEFT IT HERE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY RETURN FOR IT!
AND, TO JUDGE BY IT'S COMPLEXITY, ITS BUILDERS WILL BE MOST FORMIDABLE.
ASTRON--YOU'RE A SNIVELLING COWARD! THE WEAPONS HERE--ADDED TO OUR ALREADY AWESOME ABILITIES--MAKE US MORE THAN A MATCH FOR ANY FOE IN THE UNIVERSE!
AND BY THE TIME ANYONE ARRIVES TO INVESTIGATE, WE'LL BE LONG GONE FROM THIS STINKING ICEBALL!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?!
WE ARE GOING TO BUILD A SHIP TO CARRY US BACK TO EARTH!

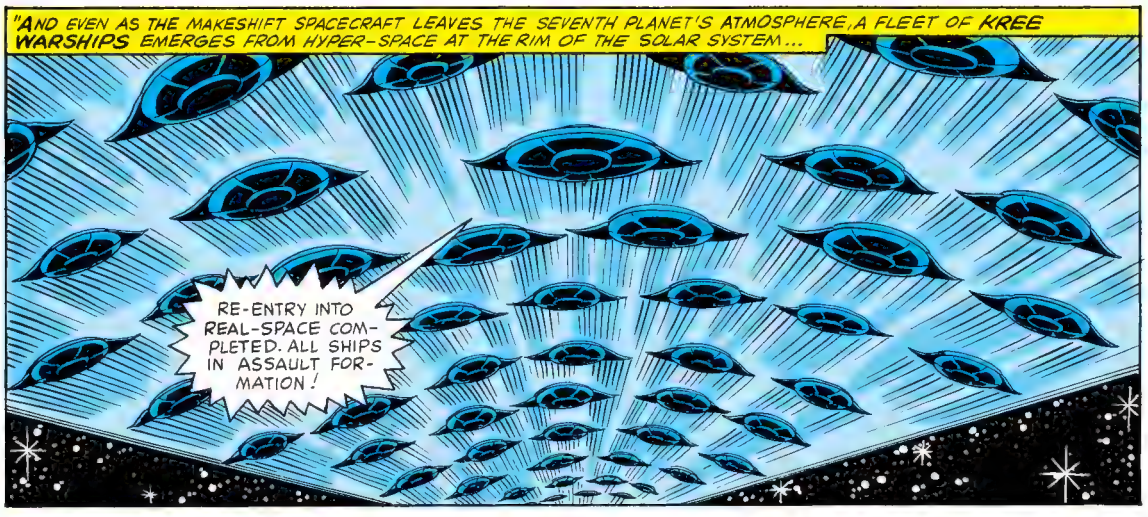

AND ONCE WE GET BACK TO THE PLANET THAT SPAWNED US, WE WILL USE OUR NEW-FOUND TECHNOLOGY TO DESTROY OUR BRETHREN WHO DARED SEND US INTO EXILE!
"MONTHS PASS, AND ALL BUT A MERE HANDFUL LEND THEIR ENERGIES TO THE ENORMOUS TASK OF CONSTRUCTING A SPACECRAFT FROM SALVAGED MATERIALS...
"ASTRON MAKES NO REPLY. URANOS IS CLEARLY THE LEADER OF THE EXILES AND IT WILL BE HIS WILL THAT PREVAILS.

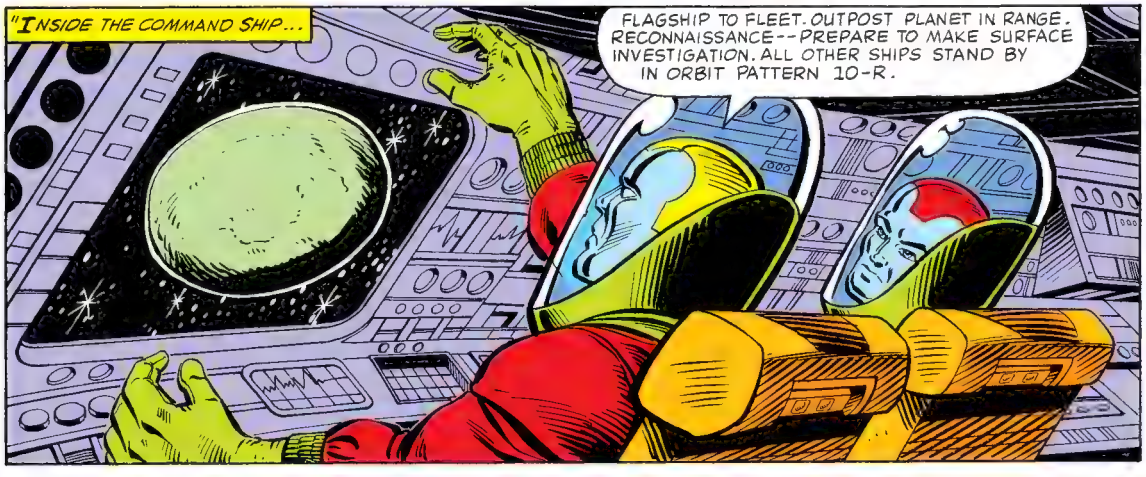

"FINALLY...
ACCORDING TO CHIEF ENGINEER ARLOK, OUR SHIP IS AT LAST SPACEWORTHY!
COME, MY PEOPLE--WE GO TO MEET OUR DESTINY!

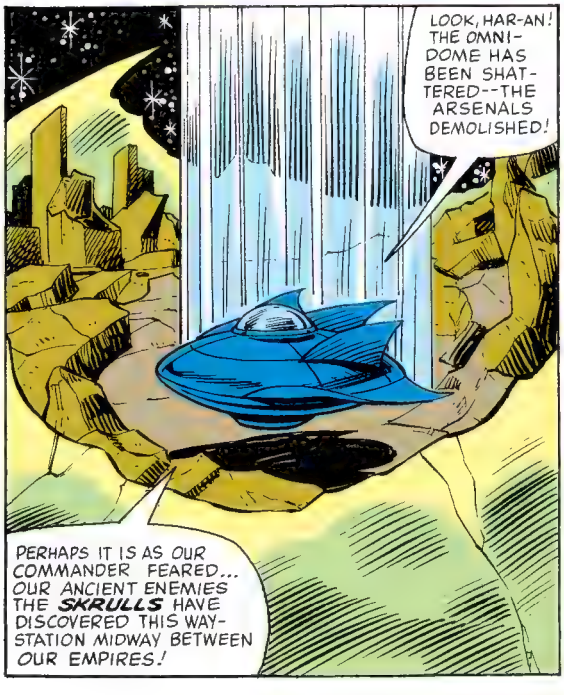
WHAT YOU ARE DOING IS WRONG, URANOS. I SHALL NOT ACCOMPANY YOU!
PRESUMPTUOS CRETIN! DID YOU THINK I WAS GOING TO ALLOW YOU?!

YOU AND YOUR THREE PATHETIC SYMPATHIZERS SHALL REMAIN HERE IN EXILE FOREVER!
GIVE MY REGARDS TO THE BEINGS WHO COME TO INVESTIGATE THE BROKEN SENTRY! HA HA HA!

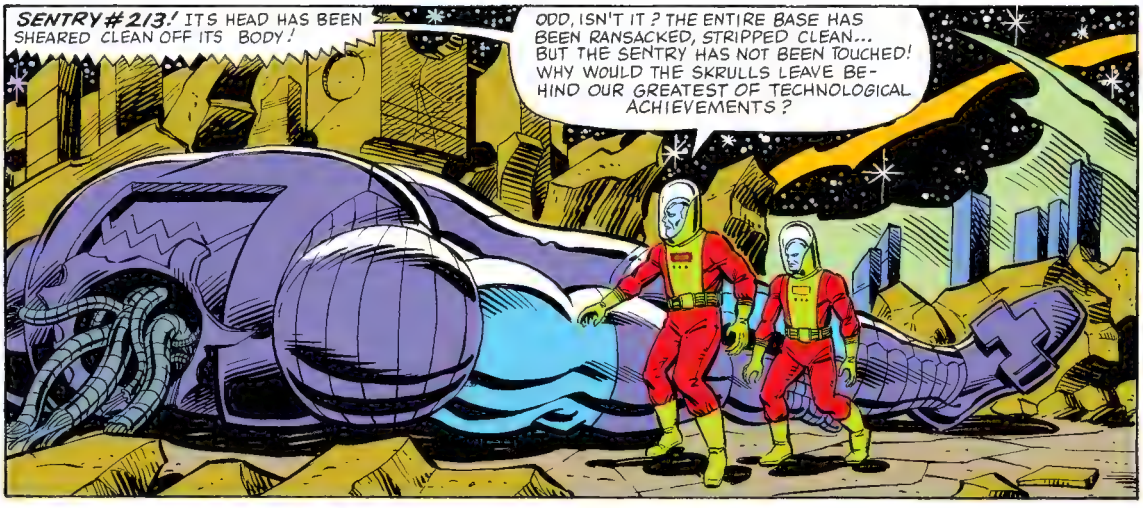

VOOSH
COURAGE, MY LOVE! WE SHALL SURVIVE AND PROSPER, AND MAKE THIS WORLD A PLACE OF PEACE!


"AND EVEN AS THE MAKESHIFT SPACECRAFT LEAVES THE SEVENTH PLANET'S ATMOSPHERE, A FLEET OF KREE WARSHIPS EMERGES FROM HYPER-SPACE AT THE RIM OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM...
RE-ENTRY INTO REAL-SPACE COMPLETED. ALL SHIPS IN ASSAULT FORMATION!


"INSIDE THE COMMAND SHIP...
FLAGSHIP TO FLEET. OUTPOST PLANET IN RANGE. RECONNAISSANCE--PREPARE TO MAKE SURFACE INVESTIGATION. ALL OTHER SHIPS STAND BY IN ORBIT PATTERN 10-R.


LOOK, HAR-AN! THE OMNI-DOME HAS BEEN SHATTERED--THE ARSENALS DEMOLISHED!
PERHAPS IT IS AS OUR COMMANDER FEARED... OUR ANCIENT ENEMIES THE SKRULLS HAVE DISCOVERED THIS WAY-STATION MIDWAY BETWEEN OUR EMPIRES!

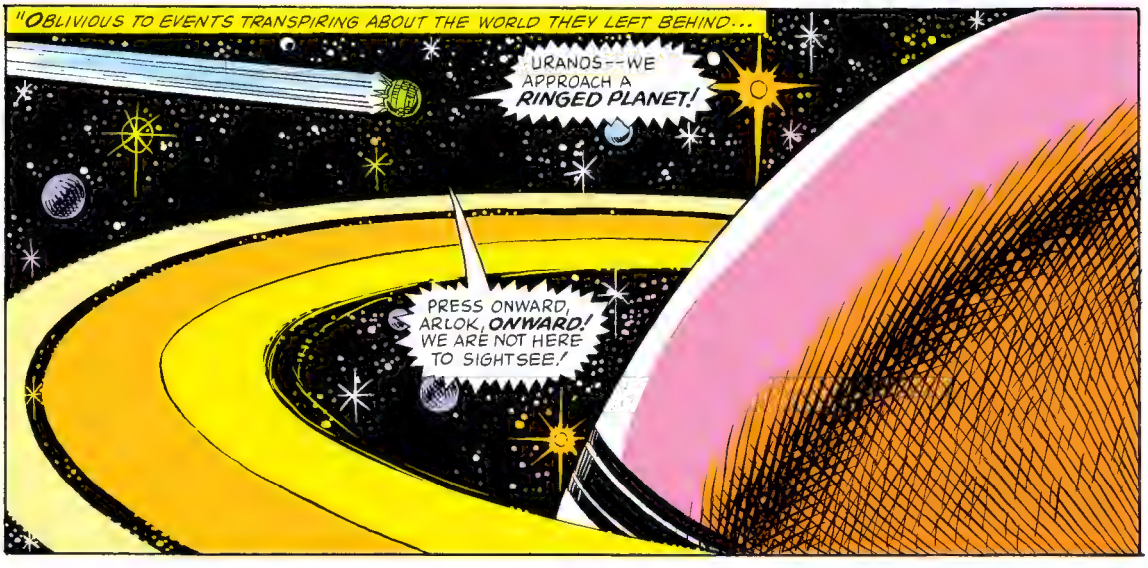
SO IT'S UP TO US TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE DEVASTATION WAS WROUGHT BY SKRULLIAN HANDS!
SCANNERS SHOW NO LIFE-READINGS IN THE VICINITY, SKRULL OR OTHERWISE!
STILL THE DESTRUCTION LOOKS RECENT IN--RO-TAR, LOOK!

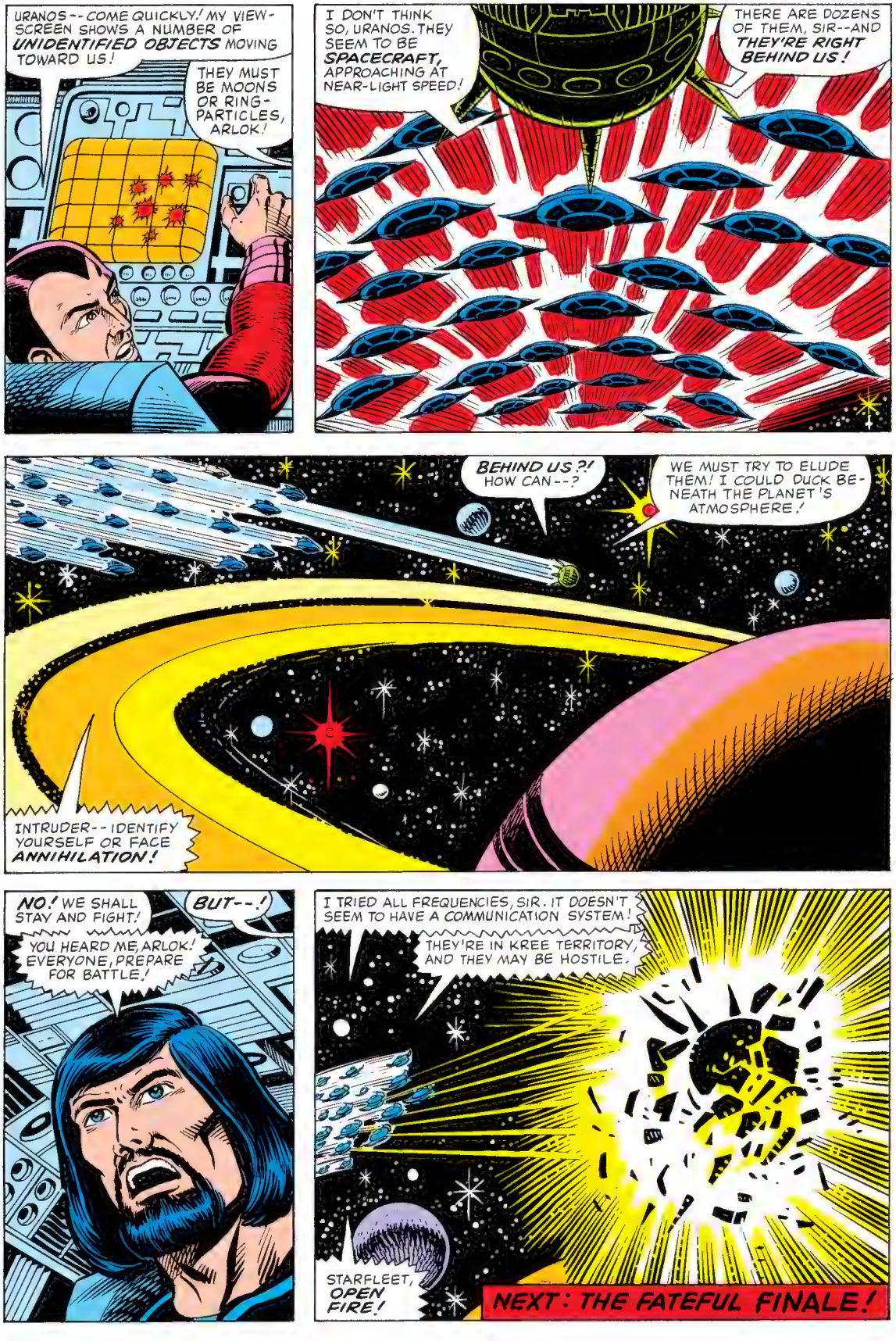

SENTRY #213! ITS HEAD HAS BEEN SHEARED CLEAN OFF ITS BODY!
ODD, ISN'T IT? THE ENTIRE BASE HAS BEEN RANSACKED, STRIPPED CLEAN... BUT THE SENTRY HAS NOT BEEN TOUCHED! WHY WOULD THE SKRULLS LEAVE BEHIND OUR GREATEST OF TECHNOLOGICAL ACHIEVEMENTS?

"MEANWHILE, ABOVE...
TALOS TO FLAGSHIP. WE'VE JUST PICKED UP AN OBJECT MOVING AT ONE-TENTH LIGHT-SPEED!
IT APPEARS TO BE A SPACECRAFT.

TALOS, THIS IS FLAGSHIP. ARE YOU CERTAIN IT IS BUT ONE SHIP? WE WERE EXPECTING THE WHOLE SKRULL ARMADA.
JUST ONE SHIP, SIR.
VERY WELL, REROUTE FLEET IN PURSUIT PATTERN.

"AT THAT MOMENT ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD...
ASTRON, LOOK! THE ALIEN SHIPS SEEM TO BE LEAVING!
PERHAPS WE HAVE ESCAPED DETECTION, MY FRIENDS.


"OBLIVIOUS TO EVENTS TRANSPIRING ABOUT THE WORLD THEY LEFT BEHIND...
URANOS--WE APPROACH A RINGED PLANET!
PRESS ONWARD, ARLOK, ONWARD! WE ARE NOT HERE TO SIGHTSEE!


URANOS--COME QUICKLY! MY VIEW-SCREEN SHOWS A NUMBER OF UNIDENTIFIED OBJECTS MOVING TOWARD US!
THEY MUST BE MOONS OR RING-PARTICLES, ARLOK!
I DON'T THINK SO, URANOS. THEY SEEM TO BE SPACECRAFT, APPROACHING AT NEAR-LIGHT SPEED!
THERE ARE DOZENS OF THEM, SIR--AND THEY'RE RIGHT BEHIND US!
BEHIND US?! HOW CAN--?
WE MUST TRY TO ELUDE THEM! I COULD DUCK BE-NEATH THE PLANET'S ATMOSPHERE!
INTRUDER--IDENTIFY YOURSELF OR FACE ANNIHILATION!
NO! WE SHALL STAY AND FIGHT!
BUT--!
YOU HEARD ME, ARLOK! EVERYONE, PREPARE FOR BATTLE!
I TRIED ALL FREQUENCIES, SIR. IT DOESN'T SEEM TO HAVE A COMMUNICATION SYSTEM!
THEY'RE IN KREE TERRITORY, AND THEY MAY BE HOSTILE.
STARFLEET, OPEN FIRE!
NEXT: THE FATEFUL FINALE!

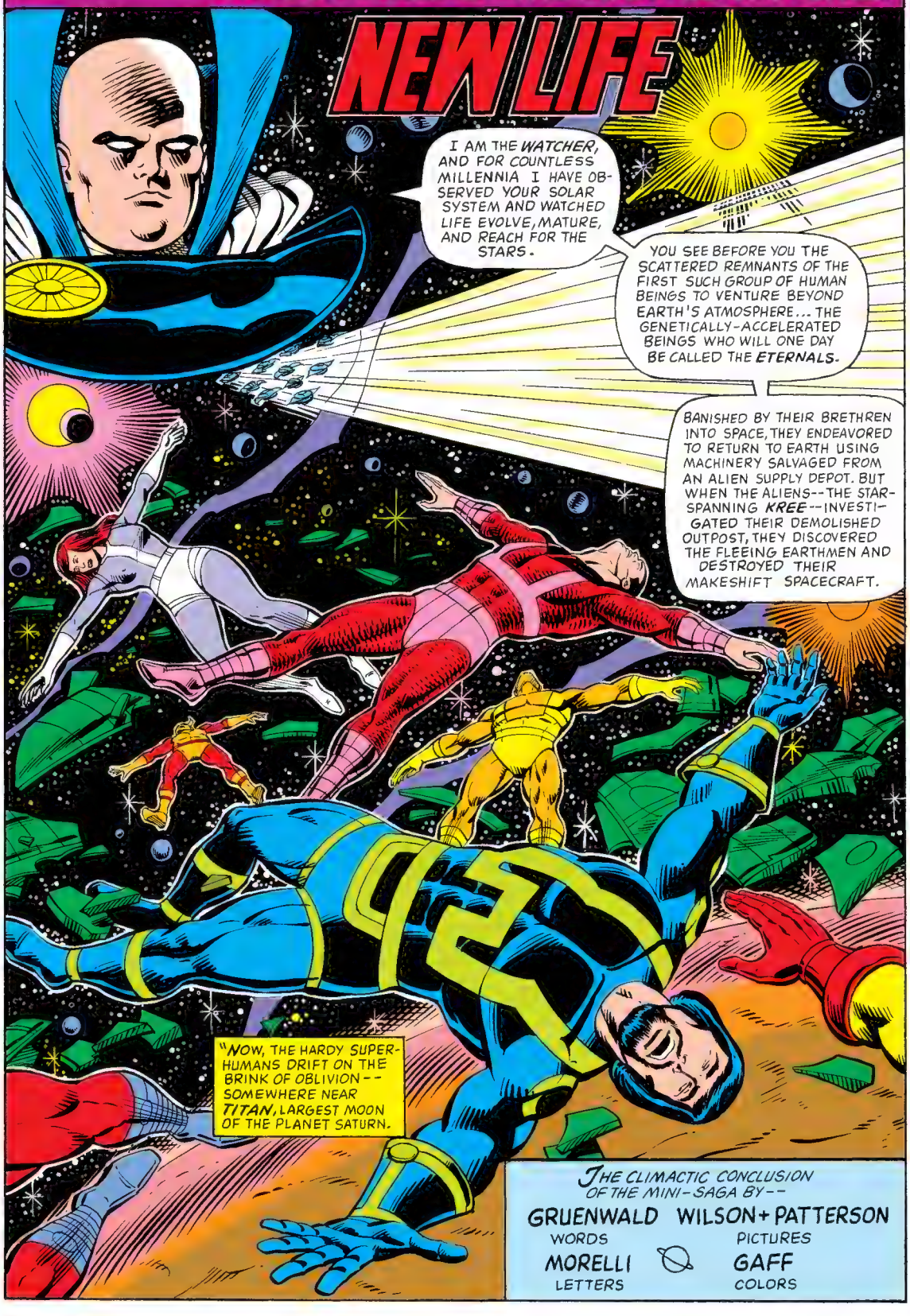
WHAT IF? #28

And the founding of Titan, where (set up in other stories) A'Lars (A.K.A. Mentor) eventually goes. I like the story implied here by the upbeat ending. They say they're going to make a happy settlement here, but the previous two stories have shown how they've made enemies who would happily crush them. Do you think the Kree are going to leave this be? Clearly not. Titan is ruins soon enough. And the story ends with something we didn't [illegible] explicitly at all: that the vivisection of the Eternals gave the Kree everything they needed to create the Inhumans. Hmmm. That's interesting, right? Perhaps another time.

— **Kieron Gillen**

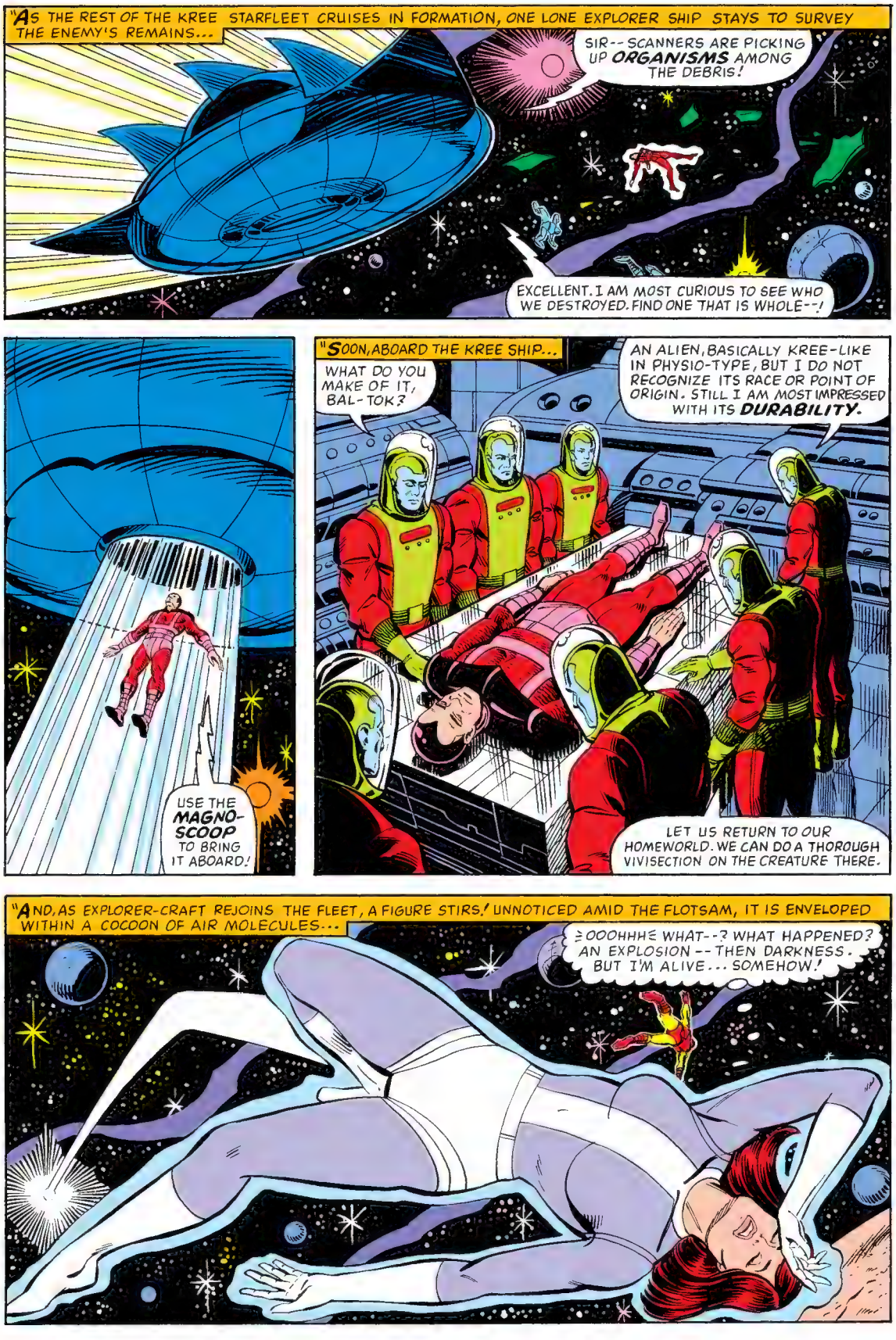
• • •

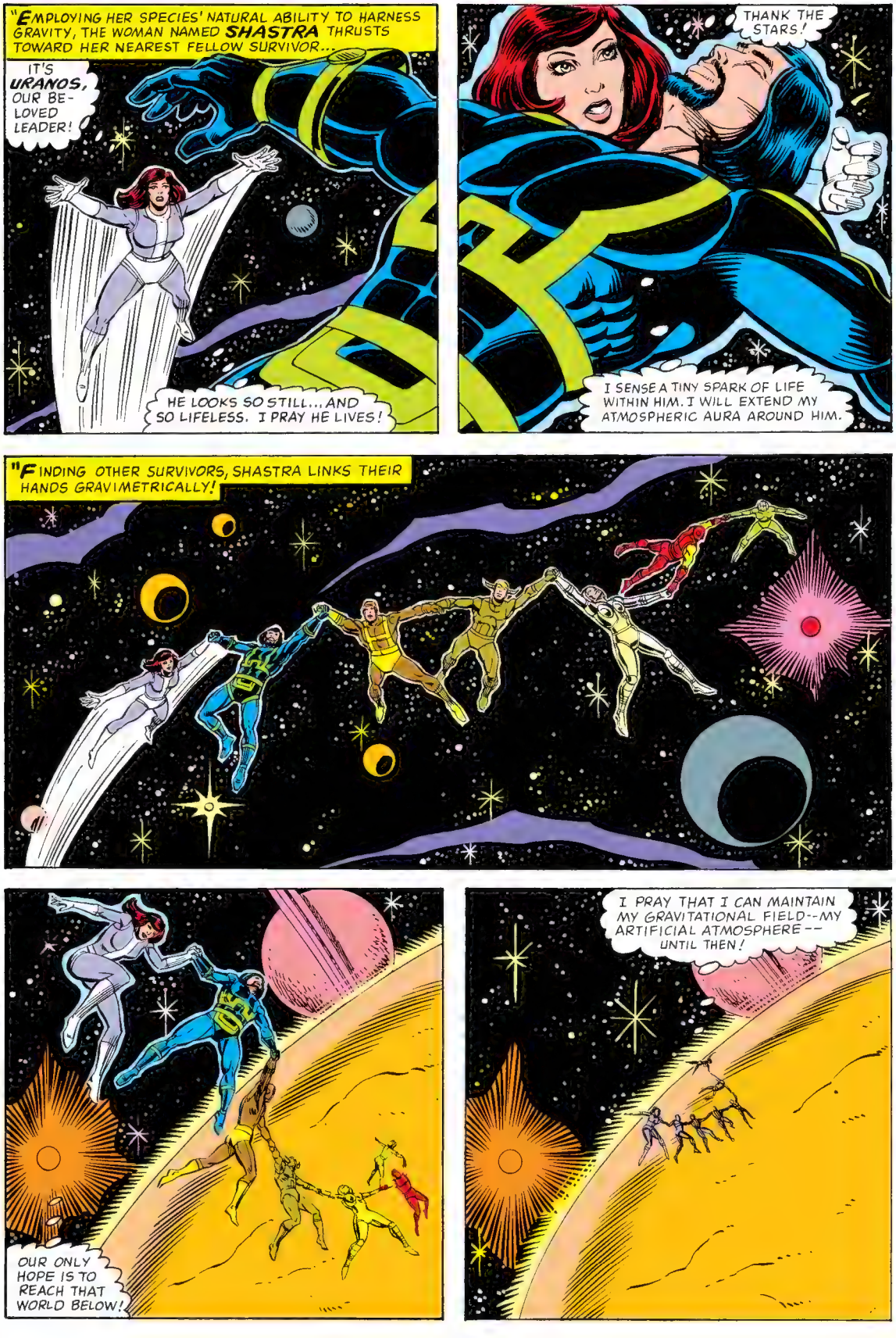
WRITER **MARK GRUENWALD** PENCILER **RON WILSON**
INKER **BRUCE PATTERSON** COLORIST **CARL GAFFORD** LETTERER **JACK MORELLI**


NEW LIFE
I AM THE WATCHER, AND FOR COUNTLESS MILLENNIA I HAVE OBSERVED YOUR SOLAR SYSTEM AND WATCHED LIFE EVOLVE, MATURE, AND REACH FOR THE STARS.
YOU SEE BEFORE YOU THE SCATTERED REMNANTS OF THE FIRST SUCH GROUP OF HUMAN BEINGS TO VENTURE BEYOND EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE... THE GENETICALLY-ACCELERATED BEINGS WHO WILL ONE DAY BE CALLED THE ETERNALS.
BANISHED BY THEIR BRETHREN INTO SPACE, THEY ENDEAVORED TO RETURN TO EARTH USING MACHINERY SALVAGED FROM AN ALIEN SUPPLY DEPOT. BUT WHEN THE ALIENS--THE STAR-SPANNING KREE--INVESTIGATED THEIR DEMOLISHED OUTPOST, THEY DISCOVERED THE FLEEING EARTHMEN AND DESTROYED THEIR MAKESHIFT SPACECRAFT.
"NOW, THE HARDY SUPER-HUMANS DRIFT ON THE BRINK OF OBLIVION--SOMEWHERE NEAR TITAN, LARGEST MOON OF THE PLANET SATURN.

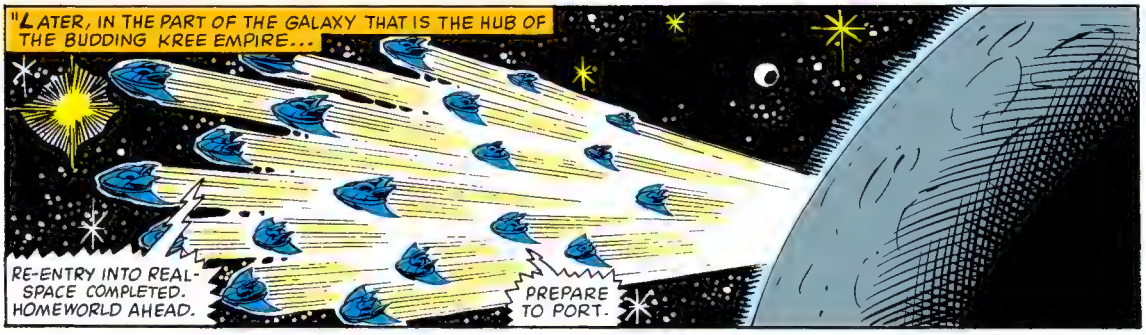
THE CLIMACTIC CONCLUSION OF THE MINI-SAGA BY--

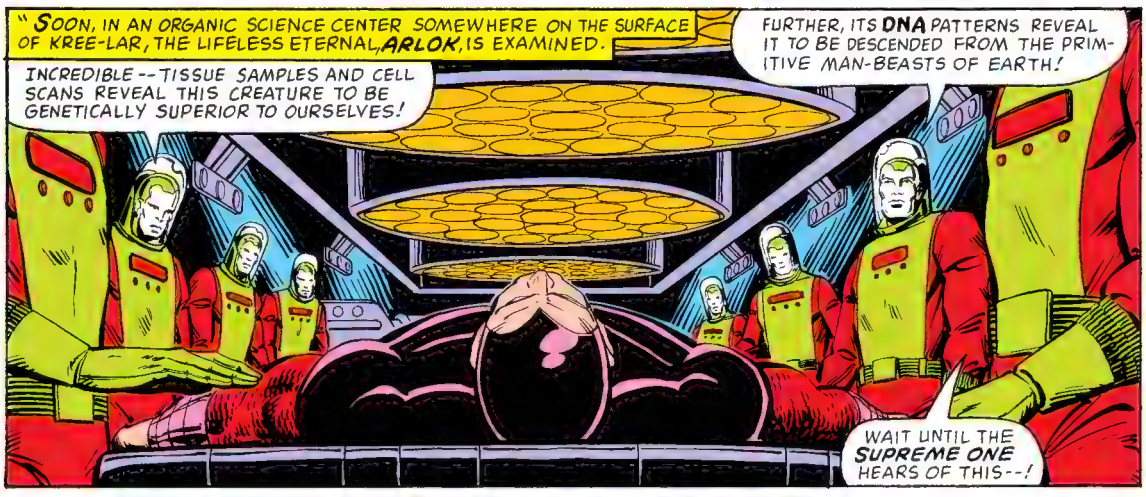
GRUENWALD — WORDS
WILSON + PATTERSON — PICTURES
MORELLI — LETTERS
GAFF — COLORS

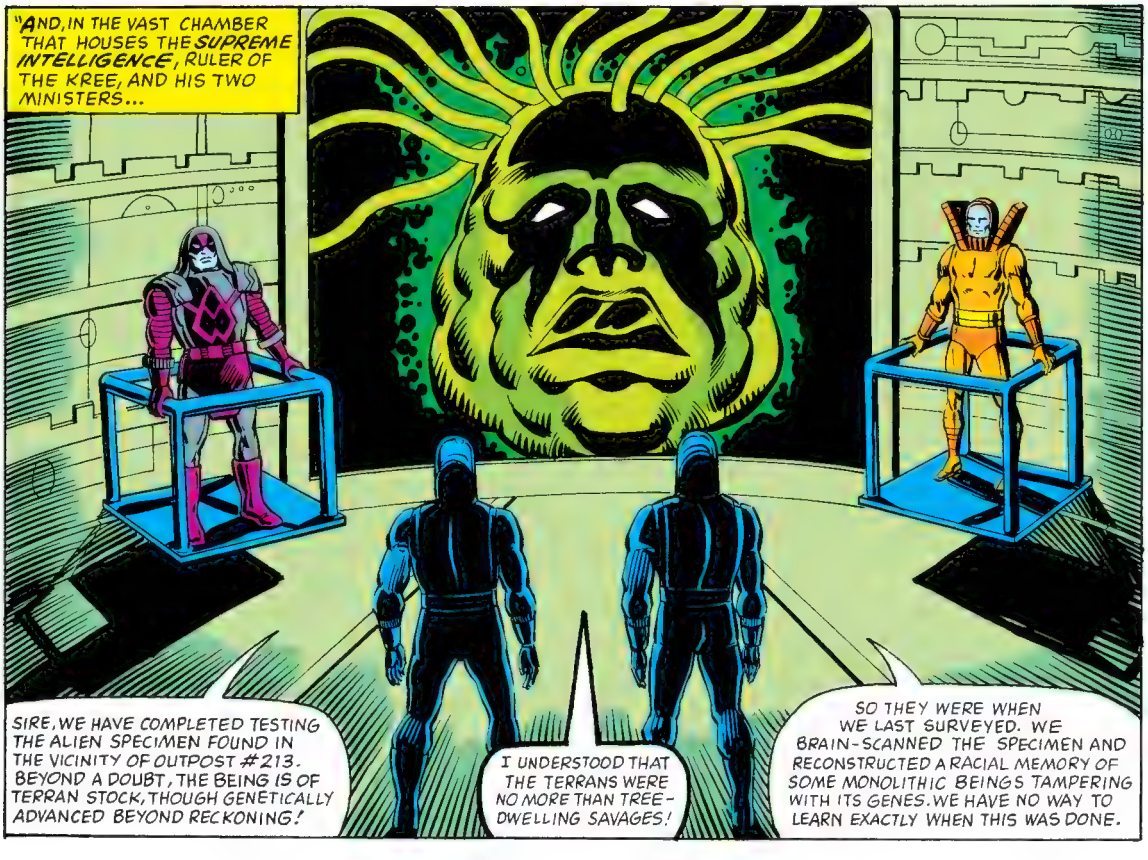

"AS THE REST OF THE KREE STARFLEET CRUISES IN FORMATION, ONE LONE EXPLORER SHIP STAYS TO SURVEY THE ENEMY'S REMAINS...
SIR--SCANNERS ARE PICKING UP ORGANISMS AMONG THE DEBRIS!
EXCELLENT. I AM MOST CURIOUS TO SEE WHO WE DESTROYED. FIND ONE THAT IS WHOLE--!
USE THE MAGNO-SCOOP TO BRING IT ABOARD!
"SOON, ABOARD THE KREE SHIP...
WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF IT, BAL-TOK?
AN ALIEN, BASICALLY KREE-LIKE IN PHYSIO-TYPE, BUT I DO NOT RECOGNIZE ITS RACE OR POINT OF ORIGIN. STILL I AM MOST IMPRESSED WITH ITS DURABILITY.
LET US RETURN TO OUR HOMEWORLD. WE CAN DO A THOROUGH VIVISECTION ON THE CREATURE THERE.
"AND, AS EXPLORER-CRAFT REJOINS THE FLEET, A FIGURE STIRS! UNNOTICED AMID THE FLOTSAM, IT IS ENVELOPED WITHIN A COCOON OF AIR MOLECULES...
≥OOOHHH≤ WHAT--? WHAT HAPPENED? AN EXPLOSION -- THEN DARKNESS. BUT I'M ALIVE... SOMEHOW!


"EMPLOYING HER SPECIES' NATURAL ABILITY TO HARNESS GRAVITY, THE WOMAN NAMED SHASTRA THRUSTS TOWARD HER NEAREST FELLOW SURVIVOR...
IT'S URANOS, OUR BE-LOVED LEADER!
HE LOOKS SO STILL... AND SO LIFELESS. I PRAY HE LIVES!
THANK THE STARS!
I SENSE A TINY SPARK OF LIFE WITHIN HIM. I WILL EXTEND MY ATMOSPHERIC AURA AROUND HIM.
"FINDING OTHER SURVIVORS, SHASTRA LINKS THEIR HANDS GRAVIMETRICALLY!
OUR ONLY HOPE IS TO REACH THAT WORLD BELOW!
I PRAY THAT I CAN MAINTAIN MY GRAVITATIONAL FIELD--MY ARTIFICIAL ATMOSPHERE--UNTIL THEN!

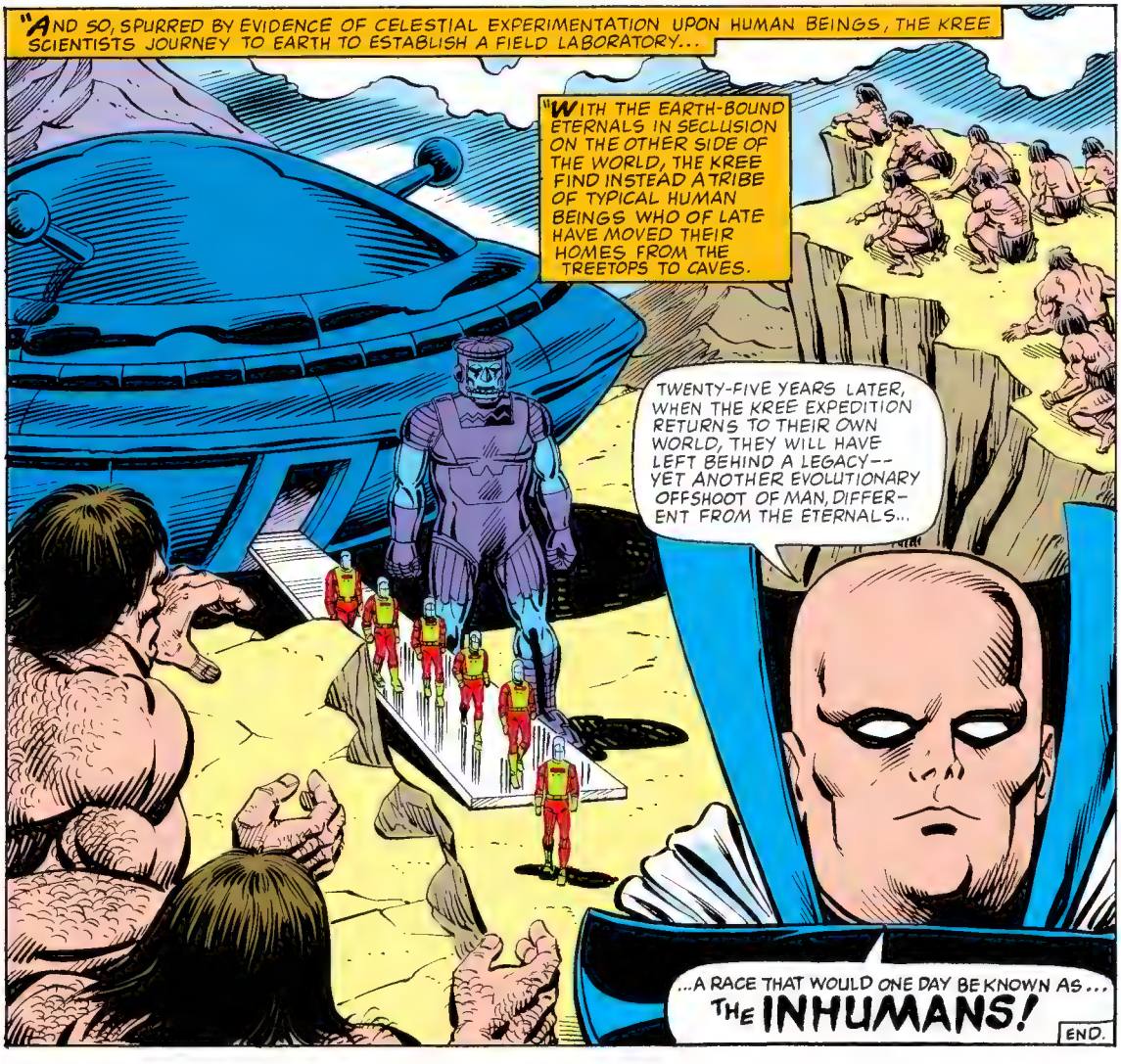
"AGONIZING MINUTES LATER... THE BATTERED BAND OF SUPER-HUMANS FALL PLANETWARD, TOWARD ONE OF THE SATELLITES OF SATURN. THE HEAT OF RE-ENTRY REVIVES THOSE WHO STILL LIVE...
PRAISED BE OUR PROGENITORS! THIS PLANET DOES POSSESS A BREATHABLE ATMOSPHERE!
WE HAD BEST FIND SHELTER. OUR ATTACKERS MAY STILL BE SEEKING US!
LOOK! THERE'S A SMALL CRATER LEADING BELOW! WE CAN FIND SANCTUARY BENEATH THE SURFACE OF THIS LONELY WORLD!
URANOS, WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS WRONG?
I FAILED US ALL.
I THOUGHT OUR MIGHT WAS A MATCH FOR THE ALIENS' MACHINES BUT THEY CRUSHED US LIKE WE WERE MERE INSECTS.
DO NOT DESPAIR, URANOS, THIS WORLD IS RICH WITH RAW MINERALS. I HAVE LEARNED MUCH FROM STUDYING THE ALIENS' MECHANISMS AT THE SUPPLY DEPOT. WE SHALL BUILD OUR OWN MACHINES!
MORE THAN MACHINES, THYRIO--WE CAN BUILD A WHOLE WORLD HERE... A WORLD TO RIVAL THE SPLENDORS OF TITANOS, THE CITY OF OUR BIRTH BACK ON EARTH.
COME, URANOS... WE SHALL CALL OUR NEW WORLD... TITAN!
"AND SO, THE BAND OF EXILES BEGIN TO EKE OUT A HOME FOR THEMSELVES... A HOME THAT, WHEN COMPLETED DECADES LATER, WILL BE HAILED AS ONE OF THE WONDERS OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM...


"LATER, IN THE PART OF THE GALAXY THAT IS THE HUB OF THE BUDDING KREE EMPIRE...
RE-ENTRY INTO REAL-SPACE COMPLETED. HOMEWORLD AHEAD.
PREPARE TO PORT.


"SOON, IN AN ORGANIC SCIENCE CENTER SOMEWHERE ON THE SURFACE OF KREE-LAR, THE LIFELESS ETERNAL, ARLOK, IS EXAMINED.
INCREDIBLE--TISSUE SAMPLES AND CELL SCANS REVEAL THIS CREATURE TO BE GENETICALLY SUPERIOR TO OURSELVES!
FURTHER, ITS DNA PATTERNS REVEAL IT TO BE DESCENDED FROM THE PRIMITIVE MAN-BEASTS OF EARTH!
WAIT UNTIL THE SUPREME ONE HEARS OF THIS--!


"AND, IN THE VAST CHAMBER THAT HOUSES THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE, RULER OF THE KREE, AND HIS TWO MINISTERS...
SIRE, WE HAVE COMPLETED TESTING THE ALIEN SPECIMEN FOUND IN THE VICINITY OF OUTPOST #213. BEYOND A DOUBT, THE BEING IS OF TERRAN STOCK, THOUGH GENETICALLY ADVANCED BEYOND RECKONING!
I UNDERSTOOD THAT THE TERRANS WERE NO MORE THAN TREE-DWELLING SAVAGES!
SO THEY WERE WHEN WE LAST SURVEYED. WE BRAIN-SCANNED THE SPECIMEN AND RECONSTRUCTED A RACIAL MEMORY OF SOME MONOLITHIC BEINGS TAMPERING WITH ITS GENES. WE HAVE NO WAY TO LEARN EXACTLY WHEN THIS WAS DONE.

SIRE, I PROPOSE WE MOUNT AN EXPEDITION TO EARTH FOR THE PURPOSE OF CONDUCTING OUR OWN EXPERIMENTS ON THE NATIVES... AND PERHAPS WE CAN LEARN OF THESE BEINGS WHO MANIPULATED THEM.
AND WHAT WE LEARN ABOUT GENETIC-ENGINEERING BY WORKING WITH THESE TEST-SUBJECTS MAY BE APPLICABLE TO OUR OWN GENETIC STOCK.
IF THESE TERRANS ARE AS GENETICALLY MALLEABLE AS WE SUSPECT, THEY MAY BE OF GREAT VALUE IN OUR CONQUEST OF SPACE.
YOUR REASONING IS MOST PERSUASIVE. GO TO EARTH AT ONCE. I SHALL SEE THAT YOU ARE FULLY PROVISIONED.


"AND SO, SPURRED BY EVIDENCE OF CELESTIAL EXPERIMENTATION UPON HUMAN BEINGS, THE KREE SCIENTISTS JOURNEY TO EARTH TO ESTABLISH A FIELD LABORATORY...
"WITH THE EARTH-BOUND ETERNALS IN SECLUSION ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD, THE KREE FIND INSTEAD A TRIBE OF TYPICAL HUMAN BEINGS WHO OF LATE HAVE MOVED THEIR HOMES FROM THE TREETOPS TO CAVES.
TWENTY-FIVE YEARS LATER, WHEN THE KREE EXPEDITION RETURNS TO THEIR OWN WORLD, THEY WILL HAVE LEFT BEHIND A LEGACY-- YET ANOTHER EVOLUTIONARY OFFSHOOT OF MAN, DIFFERENT FROM THE ETERNALS...
...A RACE THAT WOULD ONE DAY BE KNOWN AS... THE INHUMANS!
END.

ETERNALS: THANOS RISES VARIANT BY **RON LIM** & **ISRAEL SILVA**

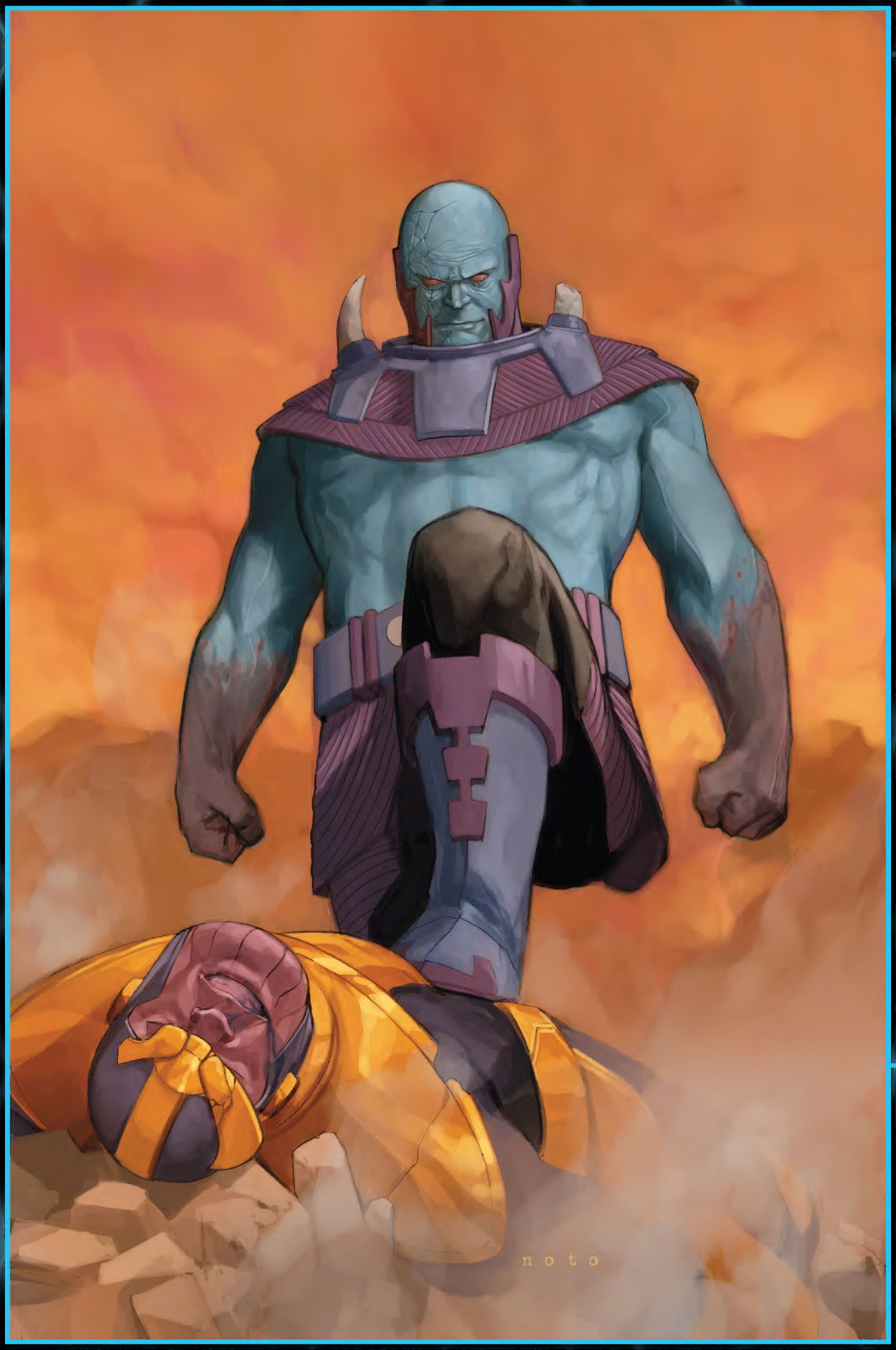
ETERNALS: THANOS RISES STORMBREAKERS VARIANT BY **IBAN COELLO** & **ISRAEL SILVA**

ETERNALS: THANOS RISES HEADSHOT VARIANT BY **TODD NAUCK** & **RACHELLE ROSENBERG**

ETERNALS: THANOS RISES VARIANT BY **SALVADOR LAROCCA** & **GURU-eFX**

ETERNALS: CELESTIA DEADPOOL 30TH ANNIVERSARY VARIANT BY **ROB LIEFELD**

ETERNALS: CELESTIA VARIANT BY **NELSON BLAKE II**



ETERNALS: THE HERETIC VARIANT BY **PHIL NOTO**

"Enriches the main story with additional context and vivid art."
– Multiversity Comics

AS THANOS RISES TO THREATEN THE FUTURE, LEARN LESSONS IN HISTORY FROM

THE ETERNALS' MYTHIC PAST!

ETERNALS ARE CREATED, NOT BORN. Some of them thought they could find a better way. They were terribly, terribly wrong. Now that the truth of their existence is revealed, Ajak and Makkari must try to find a road forward – no matter how terrifying it will be. And believe it or not, Thanos is not actually the worst leader that the Eternals' society has ever seen. That honor belongs to someone even more horrific. Meet Uranos the Undying. And may the Celestials have mercy on your souls. Plus: a classic exploration of Chronos, Uranos and the hidden origins of the Eternals!

COLLECTING ***ETERNALS: THANOS RISES***, ***ETERNALS: CELESTIA*** AND ***ETERNALS: THE HERETIC*** – BY KIERON GILLEN, DUSTIN WEAVER, KEI ZAMA, RYAN BODENHEIM, EDGAR SALAZAR, LIVESAY, MATTHEW WILSON AND CHRIS O'HALLORAN – PLUS MATERIAL FROM ***WHAT IF? (1977) #24-28***.

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